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# Instruments of the Divinity

## Providence and Praxis in the Foundation of the Society of Jesus

*By*

Christopher van Ginhoven Rey



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## CONTENTS

Acknowledgments .....	vii
List of Abbreviations .....	ix
Introduction .....	1

### PART ONE

#### *AD MODUM LABORANTIS:* THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA AND THE THEOLOGY OF USE

1. The Suspect Zone of Mysticism .....	21
2. From the Image to the Spiritual Passions .....	35
3. The Use of Things .....	49
4. <i>Ad modum laborantis</i> .....	69

### PART TWO

#### THE PRAXIS OF PROVIDENCE: THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AND THE THEOLOGY OF THE INSTRUMENT

5. Providence .....	89
6. The Jesuit Instrument .....	99
7. Sacramental Instrumentality .....	113
8. Instruction .....	129
9. World .....	143

### PART THREE

#### THE DAMAGED INSTRUMENT: IGNATIUS' CRITIQUE OF ASCETIC IDEALS

10. The Ascetic Drive .....	157
11. The <i>Rara Avis</i> of Discernment .....	169
12. A Hermeneutic Instrumentality .....	185
13. A Community of Instruments? .....	207

Postscript .....	227
Bibliography .....	233
Index .....	241

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### I. *Works by Saint Ignatius*

- Acta.* *Monumenta Ignatiana. Scripta de Sancto Ignatio. Fontes narratiivi de Sancto Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Jesu initiiis*, 4 vols., 1:354–507.
- Exx.* *Monumenta Ignatiana. Exercitia spiritualia Sancti Ignatii de Loyola et eorum directoria*, 2 vols., 1:140–417.
- Cons.* *Monumenta Ignatiana. Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Constitutiones Societatis Jesu*, 4 vols.
- Ep.* *Monumenta Ignatiana. Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, 12 vols.

### II. *Works by Juan Alfonso de Polanco*

- Ind. I* “12 industrias con que se ha de ayudar la Compañía.” *Polanci complementa. Epistolae et commentaria p. Joannis Alphonsi de Polanco e Societatis Jesu*. 2 vols., 2:725–75.
- Ind. II* “Industrias con que uno de la Compañía mejor consiguirá sus fines,” *Polanci complementa, Epistolae et commentaria p. Joannis Alphonsi de Polanco e Societatis Jesu*. 2 vols., 2:776–807.



## INTRODUCTION

Pedro de Leturia opens his study of the genesis of the *Spiritual Exercises* (1548) of Saint Ignatius of Loyola with a simple but crucial observation.<sup>1</sup> Leturia writes that, although the very existence of the *Exercises* is proof that, like other religious institutes, the Society of Jesus is possessed of a distinct approach to the spiritual life, Ignatius' book also sets the Society apart from such groups, since most of the forms of devotion that we consider typical of particular religious communities tend to crystallize once those communities have already been constituted. That, as Leturia points out, is not true in the case of the *Exercises*, which appear on the scene many years before the Jesuit order officially came into existence.<sup>2</sup>

The *Exercises* date back, in fact, to Ignatius' own conversion. An aspiring knight, the young Íñigo, as he was known then, was convalescing from a wound he had suffered during the French siege of Pamplona when he came into contact with two well-known works of popular devotion: the *Flos sanctorum*, a selection of hagiographic tales from Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, and Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*. An avid reader of chivalric romances, Ignatius was surprised by how much both books moved him. The examples set by the saints prompted him to scrutinize every aspect of the life he had led until then and to reflect on what he should do upon his recovery. Powerful feelings began to stir inside of him as he did so, and he set out to dissect them with the aid of a notebook, where he also transcribed the passages from the two books that impressed him the most.

It was towards the end of his convalescence that Ignatius decided to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The journey, on which he embarked as soon as he was able to walk again, would take him to Manresa, where he experienced a divine illumination that completed his transformation. It was

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<sup>1</sup> Ignatius worked on the *Exercises* for more than two decades. I give here, as is customary, the date of its official approval and first printing.

<sup>2</sup> Pedro de Leturia, "Génesis de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio y su influjo en la fundación de la Compañía de Jesús," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 10 (1941): 17. Leturia mentions, as examples of the rule he identifies, the Benedictine, Cistercian, Carmelite, Dominican, Franciscan, and Salesian orders. The Society of Jesus officially came into existence on 27 September 1540, the date of the promulgation of *Regimini militantis ecclesia*, the papal bull that granted official recognition to Ignatius and his companions.

there, too, that he was initiated into the methods of prayer outlined in the works of the leading figures of *devotio moderna*. Ignatius' reflections on this practice also made their way into his notebook, one of the few possessions he took with him upon leaving his native Guipuzcoa. This material would prove crucial once Ignatius set out to develop his own method of prayer. Carefully delineated in the *Exercises*, this method reflects Ignatius' experience guiding others through it, along with everything he learned in the time he spent, upon returning from Jerusalem, in the universities of Alcalá, Salamanca, and Paris, which is where the original contingent of Jesuits first met.

Leturia views the fact that the *Exercises* came into being before the Society as more than a simple deviation from a general norm. While he himself does not speak in these terms, it would be accurate to say that his work is representative of a tendency to interpret the *Exercises*' priority in time as a reflection of their priority in the order of causality. Conceived either as an 'efficient' cause, responsible for actually bringing the Society into existence—consider, in this context, the role that the *Exercises* played in building Ignatius a core group of followers—or as a 'formal' cause, responsible for bestowing the Society with its particular character—we know that their practice furnished the Society's founders (and, chief among them, Ignatius) with a series of insights that would determine some of their more important decisions—Ignatius' book is universally ascribed a twofold 'foundational dimension.' The *Exercises* are regarded both as a work that would play a key role in the Society's foundation and as the foundation on which the Society itself would come to rest.<sup>3</sup>

The traditional way of tracing this foundational dimension consists in the identification of correspondences between the *Exercises* and the Society's *Constitutions* (1553). These correspondences can be textual, as is the case with the *Constitutions'* formulation of the Society's mission, an echo of the *Exercises'* famous Meditation on Two Standards and its representation of Christ's desire that "sacred doctrine" be spread "to all

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<sup>3</sup> I speak of the *Exercises'* 'foundational dimension' partly so as to capture, in one expression, the two kinds of causality I mentioned. Playing on both senses of the word 'foundation,' the expression is meant to hint at the process leading to the permanent establishment of a particular institutional reality—precisely what is at stake in discussions of the *Exercises* that treat it as an 'efficient' cause—and at the notion of an underlying principle or basis—what the *Exercises* are supposed to be when they are approached as a 'formal' cause. The argument that the *Exercises* shaped the Society through the impact that their practice had on its founders can be found in Luis de la Palma's *Camino espiritual* (Barcelona: Librería de Jaime Subirana, 1860), 5.3. Leturia discusses it in "Génesis," 17.

peoples.”<sup>4</sup> But they can also unfold at other levels, as Leturia’s analysis demonstrates only too well: he, too, proceeds through a juxtaposition of the *Exercises* and the *Constitutions*, but he is ultimately concerned with the way in which specific aspects of the “genesis” of Ignatius’ book (for example, the transformation of a private text into a manual for others to use) are reflected in those aspects of the Society’s “character” that the *Constitutions* set out to codify (such as the importance that its members place on helping others save themselves, in opposition to an exclusive concern with their own salvation).

In this book, I also approach the *Exercises* as a work that would play a key role in the Society’s foundation and as the foundation on which the Society would come to rest. What distinguishes my inquiry, however, is the way in which I set out to trace this foundational dimension. My own approach to this dimension, as reflected in the pages that follow, differs from the one I have just sketched on two fronts. First, as regards the *Exercises*, I view this text as the work of a theologian, and focus accordingly on the theology that underlies them. I do not mean to argue, against what has already been established, that Ignatius “addressed theological issues in a direct and technically explicit way.”<sup>5</sup> This is what we have come to expect of a theologian, and decidedly *not* what Ignatius did. At the same time, this understanding of theology gives us only one modality of that ‘discourse’ (*logos*) about ‘God’ (*theos*) that theology is. Other modalities are possible, and the *Exercises* in fact contain one of them, to be found in the request that God be conceived *ad modum laborantis*.<sup>6</sup> What makes this particular discourse about God interesting, aside from the questions raised by the idea of a *laboring* God, is precisely the extent to which it is conscious of the fact that the kind of discourse it exemplifies is always modulated, in other words, that it is rhetorically inflected—this is precisely what the words *ad modum* make explicit: God is conceived ‘in the manner of’ something else, that is to say, metaphorically. I will return to this point later on. For now, I want simply to remark on this metaphorically modulated theology and on the fact that it is as legitimate a construction as the one that strives for technical precision.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Exx., 145. English translation of the *Exercises* in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, eds. Joseph Munitiz and Philip Endean (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 283–360.

<sup>5</sup> John O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 247.

<sup>6</sup> Exx., 236.

<sup>7</sup> This conception of the *Exercises*’ theology marks a departure from what Hugo Rahner established in his now classic work *Ignatius the Theologian*, trans. Michael Barry (London: Chapman, 1968). Rahner, whose book remains one of the few sustained attempts to

My approach to the problem of the *Exercises*' foundational dimension also differs, however, in its conception of the location, so to speak, of the Society itself. As I have already noted, the traditional way of tracing this dimension searches for evidence of this dimension in the Society's *Constitutions*. It is in that document that one can expect to encounter the entity in whose foundation the *Exercises* played such a key role. Reading the Society's *Constitutions*, however, I was struck by a series of references to the individual Jesuit as God's "instrument." The metaphor of the instrument surfaces at different points throughout the text, but its most important formulation is found in the concluding section, devoted to a discussion of the Society's preservation and development: the text speaks, in this context, of "the means which unite the instrument with God, disposing it so that it may be wielded dexterously by his divine hand."<sup>8</sup> Later on, I would learn that this way of speaking about the individual Jesuit first makes an appearance in a set of preparatory sketches for the *Constitutions* that were drafted by Juan Alfonso de Polanco, the head of the Society's secretariat in Rome, and that it can also be encountered in a series of letters that Ignatius wrote in his capacity as the Society's first general superior. I interpreted the fact that the metaphor of the instrument is not confined to the *Constitutions* as an indication that it was necessary to attribute to it a certain autonomy, to view it as separate from the corpus in which it is nevertheless found, and to recognize that it is instead inscribed in something that at first sight—and certainly by comparison to this corpus—might seem somewhat diffuse, something along the lines of what sociologists of culture have in mind when they speak of a 'social imaginary.' In its technical sense, this concept designates the metaphorical repertoire through which the members of a community come to represent various aspects of their existence within that community, ultimately so as to furnish that community with a representation of itself.<sup>9</sup> Would it be possible, I won-

consider Ignatius seriously as a theologian, writes that the "heart" of Ignatius' theology lies in his efforts to give expression to the "descending movement from God to creatures" that is paradigmatically instantiated in "an influx of consolation which can only come from above" (4–5). Though Rahner's account of the relation between God and creatures draws from Ignatius' discussion of God *ad modum laborantis*, Rahner does not consider the implications of this specific way of conceiving of God.

<sup>8</sup> *Cons.*, 813. English translations of the *Constitutions* in *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, ed and trans. George Ganss (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970).

<sup>9</sup> This definition of the imaginary follows the one proposed by Cornelius Castoriadis in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998). Castoriadis understands the imaginary as the symbolic reservoir that "gives a specific orientation to every institutional system" by determining "its singular manner of living, of seeing and conduct-

dered, to trace the *Exercises'* foundational dimension not by reference to the Society's *Constitutions*, but by reference to its social imaginary?

This imaginary, as the 'repertoire' I have claimed it is, includes other metaphors. Those familiar with the *Constitutions* and with Ignatius' letters will probably be reminded, in this connection, of the metaphor of the Lord's vineyard. My decision to focus on *one* element of this imaginary answers to the experimental nature of this inquiry: it seemed pertinent, considering that I wanted to explore the *possibility* of tracing the *Exercises'* foundational dimension differently, to do so in the most focused way possible. My decision to focus on this particular element, for its part, answers to the fact that the metaphor of the instrument is the one that, as I will show in what follows, resonates most deeply with my conception of the *Exercises'* theology. What is the relation, I ask, between the metaphor of the instrument and the laboring God of whom the *Exercises* speak?

It soon became clear to me that, in exploring an alternative to the traditional way of tracing the *Exercises'* foundational dimension, I was looking for a way to engage critically with the Society's foundation, a historical development about which I first learned through the work of Heinrich Böhmer, Cándido de Dalmases, James Brodrick, William van Bangert, and John O'Malley.<sup>10</sup> The story of how the Society of Jesus came to be, starting with the story of Ignatius' own conversion, captivated me from the start. I was struck, in particular, by Ignatius' creative engagement with the spiritual currents of his time, an engagement that culminated in the appearance of the *Exercises*; by the swift transformation of a charismatic fellowship of friends, united under the figure of Ignatius, into a full-fledged religious order, one that would quickly establish a presence throughout the world; and finally by the way in which Ignatius used the

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ing its own existence," along with "its relations to the world" (145). Glossing Castoriadis, John B. Thompson writes that the imaginary is the "world of significations" by means of which a society "represents its present." See his *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 24. A discussion of the role of metaphor in the construction of this imaginary can be found in Paul Ricoeur, "Imagination in Discourse and in Action," in *From Text to Action* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 168–187. Benedict Anderson's now classic *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006) is also relevant to the discussion of the Jesuit community.

<sup>10</sup> Heinrich Böhmer, *The Jesuits: An Historical Study*, trans. Paul Zeller Strodach (Philadelphia: Castle Press, 1928); Cándido de Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits: His Life and Work*, trans. Jerome Aixalá (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985); James Brodrick, *The Origin of the Jesuits* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1997); William van Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977); O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*.

challenges posed by this global presence as opportunities to articulate a lasting vision of the group's charism. Reflecting on the metaphor of the instrument, I began to ask whether this itinerary could be regarded other than as a succession of events in time, each of which left its imprint in a document, or a series of documents, accessible to the scholar. Placing the text of the *Exercises* in dialogue with the Society's *Constitutions* and with a selection of Ignatius' letters, I thought that I could identify, in this foundation, a conceptual nucleus that manifested itself at a rhetorical level, in and through a metaphor that, as I have noted, is part of the group's imaginary. I wondered, accordingly, whether it would be possible to look at the documents associated with the Society's foundation as one single corpus and to regard this corpus less as a record of events than as an attempt to engage with a series of questions, and ultimately as a juncture in the conceptualization of a problem. In its appeal to the metaphor of the instrument, I argue in this study, the corpus of the Society's foundation—and, chief among those responsible for it, Ignatius himself—can be shown to be *thinking* something.

I spoke above of the Society's foundation as a 'historical' development. The claim seems so obvious as to need no explanation. The Society's foundation belongs, indeed, within those past occurrences that are the concern of history.

One might, of course, have different ideas about the *kind* of history in which this development belongs. Is it in a history of spirituality, concerned, as its name indicates, with delineating the different approaches to the spiritual life and the periods inaugurated by them, ultimately so as to inquire into the development of spirituality itself?<sup>11</sup> Or is it in that history preoccupied with charting the vicissitudes of the dominant institutions within society, the kind of history that would inquire into the significance of the Society's appearance for a Church struggling with the possibility of schism, for the turbulent political landscape of early modern Europe, or for the diffusion of Renaissance humanism, to give but a few examples? Without disregarding either of these two histories—and by no means does this taxonomy pretend to be exhaustive—my approach to the Society's foundation shifts the focus towards the realm of something like intellectual history. As I noted, I consider the corpus of this foundation as a juncture in the conceptualization of a problem, and hence as an important intervention in the history of that problem.

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<sup>11</sup> See Philip Sheldrake, *A Brief History of Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

In order to identify this problem, it is necessary to look closely at the metaphor of the instrument and to consider it in relation to other fields in which it also makes an appearance. An imaginary of the kind that interests me is a permeable reality, so it should come as no surprise if the metaphor can be encountered elsewhere, in discursive spheres that also rely on metaphors to develop their claims. My hypothesis is that in making its way into a specific imaginary, a metaphor can be expected to open up that imaginary to the questions with which it is originally associated. In other words, as a community like the Society proceeds to represent its own existence through a particular metaphor—according to the definition of the imaginary that I proposed—it necessarily comes to engage with these questions.

Considering the kind of community I am dealing with here, theology is the obvious field to turn to first. To be sure, the metaphor of the instrument, as I learned, figures prominently in discussions of God's providential relation to the created order. At its most fundamental, it serves to clarify the status of things as well as the specific kind of causality to be ascribed to them. More specifically, the metaphor serves to elucidate that dimension of God's providential investment concerned, specifically, with the redemption of humanity: it plays a decisive role, in particular, in speculations about the relation between the divine and the human natures of Christ, or between the Word and the flesh, and about the administration of grace in the sacraments. The flesh is said to be the 'instrument' of the Word, and it is on its basis that one must understand the sacraments, those instruments on which the Church relies. I am aware that these claims might seem obscure outside of a detailed explanation of the technicalities involved in them. For the moment, I want simply to remark on the fact that the metaphor of the instrument provides an opening onto a tradition of theological speculation about providence.

This tradition, as it turns out, owes much to a series of insights derived from philosophical speculation and, more specifically, from what philosophy itself has to say about those dimensions of life that fall under the rubric of 'praxis.' In more than one sense, God's providential investment in creation as discussed by theologians presents us with an exemplary and normative instance of what Aristotle referred to as the *bios praktikos*, the so-called 'active life.'<sup>12</sup> Contingent on a strategic mobilization of specific

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<sup>12</sup> The *bios praktikos* must be contrasted with the *bios theoretikos*, the so-called "contemplative" life. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2011), 1095b10–15; 1098a3; 1176a30–1179a32.

instruments, humanity's redemption serves as a paradigm of the kind of 'action' that reflections on the nature of praxis have in mind when they raise those questions they consider to be central. What characterizes an instrument? Can one distinguish between different kinds of instruments? How do instruments relate to the particular economy for the sake of which they are deployed? If providence is the paradigm of praxis, then it is safe to say that in providing an opening onto a tradition of theological speculation about providence, the metaphor of the instrument provides an opening onto these questions, too.

Outside of the attempt to formulate these questions more or less explicitly—an attempt in which, as I argue, the metaphor of the instrument plays a key role—the problem of praxis makes itself felt, in the case of the Society, in a pervasive practical inflection. Consider, in this context, Ignatius' vision for the Society. This, as is well known, was an apostolic vision. The determination to spread sacred doctrine to all peoples installs the Society within that dimension of the *vita activa* concerned with the exercise of charity towards others. This explains the limits that Ignatius was keen on imposing upon prayer—the *vita contemplativa* was for him, at least at times, commensurate with a self-absorption fundamentally opposed to the commitment to help others.<sup>13</sup> The same holds true for the host of ascetic pursuits (such as penance, fasting, and vigils) that tradition also numbered within the *vita activa* (rightly so, since they concerned the *practice* of the virtues) but which were primarily aimed at the perfection of the individual: as Ignatius liked to insist, the Society was founded not only to provide its members with a space in which to secure their own salvation, but to assist God in the salvation of others.

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Heidegger provides a helpful gloss on Aristotle's distinction: "That particular way of life (*bios*) that receives its determination from *theorein* and devotes itself to it, the Greeks call *bios theoretikos*, the way of life of the beholder, the one who looks upon the pure shining-forth of what presences. In contrast to this, *bios praktikos* is the way of life that is dedicated to action and productivity." See Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Collins, 1982), 163–4.

<sup>13</sup> Ignatius in fact made ample room for a contemplative element—prayer, as far as he was concerned, was a way of securing an increase in the energy, enthusiasm, and determination with which one served others. Jerónimo Nadal's celebrated formulation of the Jesuit ideal, *contemplativus simul in actione*, is often said to express this concession to contemplation. The phrase—an echo of Ignatius' admonition, first articulated in the *Exercises*, to find God in all things—is nevertheless as much an apology of contemplative pursuits as it is an insistence on action, one that often went hand in hand, as I discuss below, with an attempt to rein in the contemplative instinct.

Consider, also, the *Exercises* themselves, starting with what they purport to be. The text outlines the different steps of what is meant to be a transformative experience. This method seeks, in turn, to effect a conversion, understood here not as an adoption of new beliefs but as a deepening of one's convictions. Like any other method, this one, too, rests on a set of principles that, taken together, constitute an 'art.' The pervasive insistence that the *Exercises* were never meant to be read reflects this point clearly: one must *do* something with them, and in such a way as to allow them to do what they are meant to do. The text is a "practical manual of asceticism"—as opposed, presumably, to a theoretical collection of axioms—comprising a set of exercises that are meant, as such, to be practiced.<sup>14</sup> It furnishes us, in short, with a codification of a spiritual *techné*, grounded upon and yet distinct from its corresponding *episteme*. One can be even more specific, and think of the *Exercises* themselves as the instrument of a spiritual art.

The practical inflection I am considering here is expressed even more explicitly in the metaphor of the instrument. The metaphor, I argue, in fact testifies to an inquiry into the nature of praxis and, once again, into its exemplary instantiation in God's providential praxis. Beyond the act of creation itself, is God at work in the world? How does this work unfold? What kind of instruments does it mobilize? Part of what I hope to show in this study is that prior to specific Jesuit contributions to a theology of providence—of the kind that have made such names as Molina, Lessius, and Caussade well known to us—the Society's very foundation becomes the occasion for a confrontation with a basic account of providence and with the questions it raises, precisely what the formulation of any theology demands. At stake in this confrontation, which finds its protagonist in Ignatius, is a praxis in which, according to the terms in which the metaphor is formulated, Jesuits themselves function as instruments. This is not to deny the Jesuits' own strategic and effective mobilization of instruments—including, for example, the *Exercises* themselves, forms of rhetorical persuasion, and even scientific instruments<sup>15</sup>—nor is it to deprive individual Jesuits of the agency they deserve to be ascribed. To the contrary, within the philosophical tradition to which I refer, the

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<sup>14</sup> The phrase "practical manual of asceticism" is Leturia's. Cf. "Génesis," 17.

<sup>15</sup> See, in this context, the many essays devoted to this topic in John O'Malley et al., eds., *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). Of special interest is Rivka Feldhay's "The Cultural Field of Jesuit Science," 107–31.

instrument appears as a figure for a specific kind of causality and agency.<sup>16</sup> The mobilization of such instruments needs to be understood, however, in relation to the divine praxis to which I have been alluding.

I have divided my inquiry into three parts, each of them centered on a specific element of the corpus I consider. Part One, “*Ad modum laborantis*: The *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and the Theology of Use,” consists of an extended reading of Ignatius’ *Exercises*. My central aim is to determine how praxis in general, and God’s providential praxis more specifically, first insinuate themselves as problem for Ignatius. I focus, for this purpose, on what the text of the *Exercises* has to say about the question of ‘use’ and on the two kinds of use that are at stake in the program. The first use, discussed in the *Exercises*’ Principle and Foundation, is the use man must make of created things if he is to save himself. I argue that the terms in which this use is discussed can be clarified with the aid of Augustine’s definition of use in *De doctrina Christiana* and in *De Trinitate*. At the heart of this definition is Augustine’s claim that created things are not to be loved for their own sake but for the sake of God: use designates, in this regard, that relation to creation in which creatures, loved not for their own sake, are allowed to refer to that for the sake of which they are loved. The *Exercises*, I argue, are intended to help one establish a similar relation to created things. This is, in essence, how I read the famous Election, the moment in which the exercitant—the individual to whom the *Exercises* are given—is asked to decide how he will position himself in relation to one such thing.<sup>17</sup>

The exercitant I have in mind throughout my reading is the individual Jesuit, the subject of that reflection on an individual vocation that Suárez considered the *Exercises* to facilitate, and which he regarded as distinct from their deployment as part of the Society’s program of ministry.<sup>18</sup> This clarification is relevant to the second of the two uses that I discuss, a use that concerns the exercitant himself. It is in relation to this use that it is possible to speak of the individual Jesuit as God’s instrument. Reading the *Exercises* carefully, I noticed that the program unfolds between

<sup>16</sup> This would be an “instrumental” or secondary agency, as opposed to the “principal” or primary agency ascribed to the one that wields the instrument.

<sup>17</sup> While some scholars speak of a ‘retreatant,’ perhaps a more graceful word, ‘exercitant’ is the term used by the majority of the works I engage with.

<sup>18</sup> Suárez’s distinguishes, in this context, between a ‘passive’ (*passivus*) and an ‘active’ (*activus*) use of the *Exercises*. I return to this distinction throughout this study.

two polarities, and that what begins as an inquiry into damnation comes to an end with that vision of God, already mentioned above, *ad modum laborantis*. It was the terms in which each polarity is formulated that caught my attention: ‘damnation,’ as it turns out, is rendered in the Spanish original as ‘*daño*,’ a word that denotes not only ‘devastation’ and ‘ruin’ but also ‘damage.’ This last meaning seemed significant to me in light, precisely, of the labor ascribed to God in what I take to be the core of the *Exercises*’ theology. Virtually everyone would agree with the claim that the *Exercises* have a reparative function; the text itself states that their purpose is to assist one with the imposition of an “order” upon one’s “disorderly” attachments. Looking at the two poles around which the program is organized, however, I wondered whether this reparative function could be understood in a literal sense. Do the *Exercises* seek to facilitate the subject’s passage out of a damaged condition, ultimately so as to assimilate him into God’s labor? This question seemed crucial in that it suggested that the *Exercises* foreshadow future references to the Jesuit as an instrument. It also suggests that the two uses that interest me might intersect, and that there is thus a use of things that allows one to be used by God: the use that one makes of the Society as one decides to join it or, should one be already part of it, as one sets out to deepen one’s vocation.

Part Two, “The Praxis of Providence: The *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus and the Theology of the Instrument,” deals with the metaphor of the instrument proper. My reading discusses the metaphor’s appearance in Polanco’s *Industrias*, two sets of preparatory drafts for the Society’s *Constitutions*, and then in the *Constitutions* themselves. The Society’s normative document, I argue, is in dialogue with a genealogy of divine providence that conceives of God’s sustaining work within creation and of the work of salvation in instrumental terms. This conception of God’s work, grounded in philosophical discussions of praxis originating in the writings of Aristotle, would come to play a decisive role in the conceptualization of the relation between the divinity and the humanity of Christ and of the sacraments. Calling attention to this genealogy is my way of insisting on the fact that the reference to the individual Jesuit as God’s instrument implies that there is a relation between the Society and the work of salvation. To a certain extent, this goes without saying—the initiative to assist God in that work (precisely what the Society’s commitment to the *cura animarum* underscores) presupposes a relation to this work. What interests me, however, is the possibility of elucidating the concrete manifestations of this relation and its implications for the Society by focusing on its instrumental determination. My reading considers, in connection with

this, what the *Constitutions* have to say about the Society's understanding of its own mission and about its relation to the world.

My analysis of the Society's understanding of its own mission centers on what the *Constitutions* have to say about instruction, a task whose relation to the metaphor of the instrument is etymologically marked. Instruction, however, is also a task that concerns the instrument as both subject and object: the instrument, as my reading of the *Constitutions* reveals, is intended as much to instruct others as to be itself instructed; its own instruction, in fact, is what makes it possible to instruct others. Michael Buckley develops this point in a fascinating analysis of Ignatius' "educational theology" that is also one of the few sustained inquiries into the metaphor of the instrument.<sup>19</sup> My reading draws from Buckley's insights, but it does not confine itself to the Society's pedagogical enterprise. Instead, I view instruction as a more ample category, to be elucidated by reference to the twin concepts of 'doctrine' (*doctrina*) and 'conversation' (*conversación*). My analysis of both confirms the claim, to be found in other discussions of the metaphor of the instrument and of its meaning for Ignatius, that there is a fundamental relation between the instrument and the field of discourse. The large number of studies of the Society's relation to this field—one thinks, in this context, of the attention that scholars have paid to the place of rhetoric in the *cura animarum*—testifies to its importance.<sup>20</sup> My focus, however, is different. I am interested, specifically, in the universalizing impetus that animates instruction as Ignatius understands it. Understood in terms of a concept of doctrine that is itself understood in terms of a continuously expanding conversation, instruction presents us with the paradigm of the universalizing impetus of a mission directed, as I have been noting, "to all peoples."

I mentioned that I am interested not only in what the metaphor of the instrument might reveal about the Society's mission, but also in what it can tell us about its relation to the world. Returning to the genealogy I trace, I inquire into the relation between the project of instruction outlined in the *Constitutions* and an instrument whose closest analogue is to be found in the sacraments. Like the sacramental instrument, I argue, the Jesuit instrument is aware of operating in a historical situation defined by

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Buckley, *The Catholic University as Promise and Project: Reflections in a Jesuit Idiom* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> See, in this context, Marc Fumaroli, "The Fertility and the Shortcomings of Renaissance Rhetoric," in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 90–106.

Christ's departure from the world. This awareness is thematized in a passage from the *Acta* (as Ignatius' autobiography is called) that deals with Ignatius' visit, on the eve of his departure from Jerusalem, to the rock of the Ascension. In my reading of this passage, I show that the proximity of the opening towards heaven with which the site of Christ's departure is associated provides Ignatius with an opportunity to renounce his initial desire to vanish through it. Recent work on the "globalization" of salvation and on the role played by the Society in the inception of a truly "global" Catholicism has shown that what distinguishes the Society's commitment to instruction as I define it is the fact that it views the entire planet as its proper domain.<sup>21</sup> What I try to show in my reading is that the implementation of a project of instruction with a universal scope is premised on a prior affirmation of the world, an affirmation like the one that is thematized in a passage that, as I show, mirrors the constitution of the sacramental instrument.

Part Three, "The Damaged Instrument: Ignatius' Critique of Ascetic Ideals," opens with an analysis of Ignatius' efforts to articulate the difference that separates the Society from its predecessors, a task that in the years leading up to his death would prove central to the consolidation of the order's institutional architecture and of its distinct institutional identity. I wanted to explore the Society's place within that *cérémonie des adieux* to medieval monasticism that M. B. Pranger identifies in the rise of early modern forms of devotion, and to do so through a reading of Ignatius' uses of the metaphor of the instrument in a series of letters and instructions that, relying on the help of Polanco, he addressed to the Society's outposts in Coimbra, Portugal and Gandía, Spain.<sup>22</sup> This choice of material seemed appropriate since these letters bear witness, in and of themselves, to that presence throughout the world that many regard as the most conspicuous evidence of the distance between the Society and the orders that came before it. It is also in them that we see Ignatius refining his vision of the Society's character, particularly as regards the place of asceticism and the philosophy of *contemptus mundi*, where ascetic pursuits are assigned a prominent place.

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<sup>21</sup> Two commanding studies of the Jesuit missions can be cited as examples of this work: Paolo Broggio's *Evangelizzare il mondo: Le missioni della Compagnia di Gesù tra Europa e America* (Rome: Aracne, 2004) and Luke Clossey's *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> M. B. Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity: Essays on the Poetics of Monasticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 191–294.

My decision to focus on the outposts of Coimbra and Gandía is strategic. Each was the site of a crisis concerning the place of asceticism, the reverberations of which would continue to be felt after Ignatius' death and the solutions to which would prove decisive for the fledgling Society. My discussion of 'asceticism' centers, specifically, on a set of practices that, while part of the ascetic life, are by no means all that this life comprises. Ignatius' critique of ascetic ideals focuses, indeed, on the place of penance, fasts, and vigils. Ignatius' position on these forms of mortification is clearly laid out in a letter that on 7 May 1547 he sent to the students in the Jesuit college in Coimbra, and which has come to be known as the Letter on Perfection. This document has been amply discussed. The central role that the metaphor of the instrument plays in Ignatius' argument, however, has gone unremarked. Even discussions of the metaphor itself make no mention of this letter, which to my knowledge is the document in which the metaphor is mentioned most often. My reading focuses, specifically, on the role played by the metaphor in the articulation of Ignatius' position on asceticism and of his decision to speak of penance, fasts, and vigils as capable of 'damaging' the instrument that Jesuits are supposed to be. I show that it is in terms of this damage, and ultimately of the specter of a damaged instrument, that Ignatius formulates the incompatibility between the ascetic drive as it was manifesting itself in Coimbra and the Society's charism.

In my reading, I remark on the way in which Ignatius, reacting to reports of an excessive indulgence in mortification, proceeds to convince the students that their own capacity to discern at which point their practices become potentially harmful is lacking. He advises them, accordingly, to let their superior make that judgment and thus to cultivate obedience. The admonition serves as a first intimation of that preoccupation with obedience that would come to dominate the last years of Ignatius' life and that would prove decisive to his legacy. Ignatius' efforts to set up an institutional culture in which obedience held pride of place have been discussed extensively, ultimately in such a way as to clear up many of the misunderstandings surrounding what Ignatius had to say about this virtue and the misconceptions, concerning his own person and the Society, to which it gave rise. What interests me here, once again, is the extent to which this crucial question, too, can be understood by reference to the metaphor of the instrument. Initially at least, obedience appears on the scene quite literally in order to avert a damage that seems imminent.

While a desire for a way of life that made more room for ascetic pursuits also lies at the origins of the crisis in Gandía, the documents

associated with it concern a different problem than the one raised by the Jesuits in Coimbra. The crisis in Gandía was brought on by Andrés de Oviedo and Francis Onfroy, two Jesuits who at one point asked Ignatius for permission to retreat to the outskirts of the city so as to be able to spend long hours in contemplative seclusion. When Ignatius denied their request, Oviedo and Onfroy proceeded to challenge him by appealing to a series of prophetic revelations in which—so they claimed—God had stated that he approved of their wishes and that he in fact viewed them as necessary for the Society's future. My reading of the documents associated with this crisis centers on a well-known instruction, prepared by Polanco and signed and annotated by Ignatius, that builds upon the conception of discernment and obedience that we first see in Ignatius' exchange with Coimbra. Ignatius gives numerous reasons for doubting Oviedo and Onfroy's capacity to discern whether the prophecies are trustworthy, before declaring that it is those who stand above them that have the kind of hermeneutic competence necessary to assess these communications. This defense of a basic hierarchical distinction, grounded on the allocation of a certain hermeneutic authority, sets the stage for the *Constitutions'* comprehensive articulation of a hierarchical order for the entire Society. What interests me the most, however, is the extent to which the instruction restricts the universality of the characterization of Jesuits in instrumental terms. The instruction, I show, is one of a series of documents that suggest that the metaphor of the instrument better fits those who, by virtue of their superior position within a hierarchy, are recognized as the legitimate interpreters of God's will. This understanding of instrumentality, resting as it does on a hierarchical hermeneutic prerogative, is in conflict with the assumption, built into the metaphor of the instrument, that every individual can claim to be gripped by the hand of God. It is with this tension in mind that I proceed, as a kind of conclusion of my analysis, to read the famous letter that on 26 March 1553 Ignatius sent to the Jesuits in Portugal.

One final remark seems appropriate before I begin. I started with a discussion of my interest in the 'foundational dimension' of the *Exercises*, and referred to the way in which this dimension tends to be dealt with by scholars. Like those who search for correspondences between the text of the *Exercises* and that of the *Constitutions*, I am ultimately concerned with the relation between a spiritual practice and an institutional reality. What distinguishes my approach is not only my insistence on the theology that underlies that spiritual practice, but also my conception of the location of

the institution. Once again, I focus not on the principles expressed in the textual monuments that purportedly shelter the Society's essence—this is how the *Constitutions* are often conceived—but on an element of the Society's imaginary.

The metaphor of the instrument, as I explained above, resonates with my own conception of the *Exercises'* theology as encapsulated in Ignatius' understanding of God *ad modum laborantis*. In that sense, my decision to seize the institutional reality in its imaginary is my way of thematizing this resonance. In retrospect, I would say that the time I had spent thinking about Ignatius' laboring God made me receptive to a metaphor that evoked, precisely, the domain of labor and that, in becoming aware of that metaphor, I simultaneously became aware of the imaginary in which it belongs. The disclosure of this imaginary as a distinct reality opened up for me an area of Ignatius' work that, to my knowledge, has not been explored in a systematic way. Ignatius' writings are a well-ploughed field, so I was thrilled to discover an alternative way of accessing them. The more I familiarized myself with those writings, however, the more it seemed to me that what had initially appealed to me because of the promise of a fresh perspective was in fact a very appropriate object on which to focus. There was, in short, something unexpectedly felicitous about my decision to focus on a metaphor. I have already noted that Ignatius was not a professional theologian. We know that his training in philosophy, too, was equally basic. While this does not have to lead to the claim that he had nothing to contribute to theology—precisely what I dispute when I speak of the *Exercises'* theology—it still is something of which one must remain aware in the course of an analysis that, as is the case with this one, places what is found in his work in relation to a theological and philosophical tradition.

What comes to mind when one thinks of a professional theologian or of a professional philosopher is a degree of conceptual rigor, a capacity for abstract systematization, and the possession and skillful use of a technically precise vocabulary, all of which are lacking from Ignatius' writings. It is worth asking, in this regard, where metaphor fits, if indeed it fits at all, within this conception of theological and philosophical inquiry. I am reminded, in this context, of the German philosopher Hans Blumenberg, who views the 'professional' inquiry I describe here as invested in effecting a passage from *mythos* to *logos*.<sup>23</sup> Blumenberg writes that from the

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<sup>23</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, trans. Robert L. Savage (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 3.

vantage point of the consummation of this passage—of a *logos* associated, in this case, with a rational and systematic discourse—metaphors are bound to look like “leftover elements.” They are the residues of a way of thinking that this passage is supposed to supersede. One can argue, however, that these “leftover elements” retain a positive value: Blumenberg himself hints at this when he writes that metaphors are possessed of a “conceptually irredeemable expressive function,” and that this function can in fact serve as a catalyst for the development of new concepts. Evocative metaphors can set in motion a process of elucidation, one that demands one to formulate technically precise distinctions. One can see this in the theological genealogy of the metaphor of the instrument, and also in a reading of the kind I undertake here. Intrigued by the presence of a powerful and evocative metaphor, I proceeded to inquire into its origins and its implications and to articulate a coherent and more or less systematic vision around it. Instead of being merely residual, then, metaphors can also be foundational—or “absolute,” to echo Blumenberg’s own terminology; they can serve as catalysts for the very process by which the *logos* produces the concepts that allow it to emerge as something distinct from and superior to *mythos*.<sup>24</sup> Regardless of whether they are residual or foundational, however, metaphors have a clear ‘outsider’ status when measured against the fantasy of a pure conceptuality, which is often what is at stake in the reference to systematic thinking, including that which informs discussions of what professional theologians are supposed to do. It seems to me that this ‘outsider’ status beautifully reflects Ignatius’ own ‘outsider’ position vis-à-vis those more ‘professional’ relations to conceptuality. I find it appropriate, for this reason, to focus on a metaphor while discussing his work.

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<sup>24</sup> “Evidence of absolute metaphors,” Blumenberg writes, “would force us to reconsider the relationship between logos and the imagination. The realm of the imagination could no longer be regarded solely as the substrate for transformations into conceptuality—on the assumption that each element could be processed and converted in turn, so to speak, until the supply of images was used up—but as a catalytic sphere from which the universe of concepts continually renews itself, without thereby converting and exhausting this founding reserve.” *Ibid.*



PART ONE

*AD MODUM LABORANTIS:*  
THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA  
AND THE THEOLOGY OF USE



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE SUSPECT ZONE OF MYSTICISM

Most of what we know about Saint Ignatius of Loyola's life prior to the foundation of the Society of Jesus comes from the *Acta*, the narrative that Luís Gonçalves da Câmara put together on the basis of Ignatius' own reminiscences. Ignatius' personal secretary, Gonçalves da Câmara approached the Society's founder sometime in 1553, urging him to tell his story. Ignatius had been promising to do so since 1550, when Jerónimo Nadal first put the request forward, convinced that other Jesuits would have much to learn from what Ignatius had to tell. While others had shown interest in assembling an account of Ignatius' life, Nadal was the first to approach Ignatius himself rather than those who had known him. In his view, the story could be told by no one else.<sup>1</sup> It was at his insistence, indeed, that Gonçalves da Câmara set out to convince Ignatius that he should embark on the project without delay. Ignatius' health had been deteriorating, and those around him feared that his death might be near. Ignatius, however, remained reluctant, and even after he eventually gave in, one Friday morning early in August, he would seek every excuse to stop. In the end, it would take him more than two years to finish his story.<sup>2</sup>

Gonçalves da Câmara's preface to the *Acta* provides a great deal of information on the work's composition. After listening attentively to Ignatius and committing his words to memory, Ignatius' secretary would distill what he had heard into a series of notes, which he then used as a basis for a longer narrative that he dictated to a scribe in Spanish and then in Italian.<sup>3</sup> The narrative as it has come down to us opens on 20 May

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<sup>1</sup> On this point, see Cándido de Dalmases' introductory remarks to the *Acta* in the *Obras completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, ed. Ignacio Iparraguirre (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1952), 5–7.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the circumstances in which the *Acta* came into being, see Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Loyola's Acts: The Rhetoric of the Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 3–5; John MacManamon, *The Text and Contexts of Ignatius Loyola's Autobiography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 2–5.

<sup>3</sup> Gonçalves da Câmara's text was translated into Latin in 1559, only three years after Ignatius' death, but the translation itself was not released until 1731. The original was for its part fated to an even greater obscurity, as it would only see the light of day in 1904. This fate can be explained by looking at the many problems the *Acta* poses. As O'Malley writes, it omits all reference to Ignatius' life prior to 1521, even though he is known to

1521, the day that the French troops launched their assault on Pamplona. Ignatius, a knight in the service of the Duke of Nájera, was among those who fought to defend the city's fortress. This was no easy task, since the Spaniards were outnumbered by the French. The Duke and his men, however, insisted on putting up a fight. This was due, the *Acta* states, largely at the instigation of Íñigo, as Ignatius was known then.<sup>4</sup> Six hours into the siege, after various rounds of heavy artillery fired by the French, a cannon-ball struck and shattered Ignatius' right knee. Part of the left leg, too, was injured. The city's fortress fell shortly after, and the wounded Ignatius was sent to convalesce to his family's castle in Guipuzcoa.<sup>5</sup>

Upon arriving there, he learned that his sister-in-law had purged the castle of the chivalric romances that he was so fond of reading. He would only have two books at his disposal: Gauberto Vagad's translation into Spanish of the *Flos sanctorum*, a selection of hagiographic tales from Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, and Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*, a compendium of reflections on the Gospels, selections from the Church Fathers, and meditations and prayers on the life of Christ recently translated into Spanish by Ambrosio de Montesinos.<sup>6</sup> The young knight embarked on this reading reluctantly, and would often find himself distracted by the kind of "vain thoughts" that had occupied his mind before. He contemplated courting a lady of more elevated rank, and spent long hours meticulously considering "the means he would take so as to reach the country where she was, the witty love poems, the words he would say to her, the deeds of arms he would do in her service."<sup>7</sup> French surgeons

have begun his story before. The circumstances of its composition, moreover, indicate that Ignatius' story "filtered through several minds and languages before it reached the written page." Along with these two issues, O'Malley also considers the problems "endemic" to autobiography as a genre (*The First Jesuits*, 8–9). Until the *Acta*'s original resurfaced, the official account of Ignatius' life was Pedro de Ribadeneira's biography, which drew much from the *Acta* but which also filled a number of lacunae. Cándido de Dalmases provides a discussion of the *Acta* and its fate in his introduction the work in Iparraguirre's edition, 14–19. Joseph N. Tylenda also touches on this point in the introduction to the English edition of the *Acta*, published under the title *A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001), 9–11. See, also, MacManamon, *Text and Contents*, 5–9.

<sup>4</sup> *Acta*, 1. English translation of the *Acta* in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, 3–64.

<sup>5</sup> *Acta*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the place of these two books in early modern devotion and of their influence on Ignatius, see James Brodrick, *Saint Ignatius Loyola: The Pilgrim Years, 1491–1538* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 61–4.

<sup>7</sup> *Acta*, 6.

had dressed his wounds and set his leg, but nine months into his convalescence his doctors concluded that the leg was not healing properly and that it had to be broken and set again. A protuberance appeared at the site of the break shortly after this painful procedure. Tormented by the possibility of deformity, Ignatius agreed to have it sawn off.

Reading the stories collected in the *Flos sanctorum*, Ignatius began to wonder whether sanctity could be a way to achieve the fame and distinction he had craved in the past. The deeds of the great saints were there to be emulated and eventually surpassed. As he lay in bed reading, the *Acta* tells us, “his whole way of thinking was to say to himself, ‘Saint Francis did this, so I must do it; Saint Dominic did this, so I must do it.’”<sup>8</sup> Ludolph’s *Vita*, the other book at Ignatius’ disposal, was in turn responsible for presenting him with the opportunity to turn his attention to Christ with the kind of intense focus that the book counseled. Ludolph’s vivid descriptions of various scenes from the Gospels are known to have captivated Ignatius, awakening in him the desire to visit Jerusalem and to set foot in the places where Christ once trod.<sup>9</sup>

Ribadeneira writes of the two books in Ignatius’ possession that, upon reading them, he began to experience a change of heart.<sup>10</sup> The determination to do what the likes of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic had done elicited a powerful affective response, one that he would spend much time dissecting. But so did the thought of devoting himself to the more worldly pursuits that were of interest to a knight. Scrutinizing both sets of feelings carefully, Ignatius noticed that these worldly thoughts could delight him just as much as the others, but that they eventually left him feeling fatigued and empty, in sharp contrast to the thought of doing what the saints had done and to those thoughts that concerned the prospect of journeying to Jerusalem. Though he felt “consoled” while entertaining such thoughts, “he would remain content and happy even after having left them aside.”<sup>11</sup>

This analysis of the feelings that accompanied the different thoughts “occurring to his imagination” was supplemented, we read in the *Acta*,

<sup>8</sup> *Acta*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of how Ludolph’s book awakened in Ignatius a desire to visit Jerusalem, see Pedro de Leturia, “Jerusalén y Roma en los designios de San Ignacio,” in *Estudios ignacianos*, vol. 1 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1957), 181–200. See, also, Paul Shore, “The *Vita Christi* of Ludolph of Saxony and Its Influence on the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola,” *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 30.1 (1998): 7–12.

<sup>10</sup> Pedro de Ribadeneira, *Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola* (Barcelona: Subirana, 1891), 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Acta*, 8.

with a transcription of those fragments from the *Vita* and the *Flos sanctorum* that he found most edifying. According to Gonçalves da Câmara, Ignatius filled three hundred sheets of “glazed and ruled paper” with his best handwriting.<sup>12</sup> This notebook, in which he also jotted down his own observations on the feelings that were stirring inside of him, was among the few possessions that Ignatius would take with him when, as soon as he was able to walk again, he left the family’s castle and embarked on a journey that would take him to Jerusalem via Montserrat, Manresa, Barcelona, Venice, and Cyprus. The notebook would remain in his possession throughout the years he spent, upon returning from the Holy Land, in the universities of Alcalá, Salamanca, and Paris, and is now thought to have served as a basis for the *Spiritual Exercises*.

It was once common to hear that the *Exercises* were dictated to Ignatius by the Virgin. The dictation itself was supposed to have taken place in the cave in Manresa where Ignatius retreated for long periods during his stay in that city. The epilogue that Gonçalves da Câmara appended to the *Acta*, however, states explicitly not only that the *Exercises* were written by Ignatius, but also that their composition extended over a long period of time.<sup>13</sup>

Scholars have taken the claim seriously and proposed different models for the text’s genesis.<sup>14</sup> Virtually all of these models begin by highlighting

<sup>12</sup> *Acta*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> “He said to me,” Gonçalves da Câmara writes, “that as for the Exercises he had not produced them all at one time, rather that some things which he used to observe in his soul and find useful for himself it seemed to him could also be useful for others, and so he used to put them in writing.” *Acta*, 99. Like most other stories that would become part of the institutional mythology of the Jesuit order, the legend that the *Exercises* were dictated to Ignatius by the Virgin probably came into being in the years leading up to Ignatius’ canonization. Bellecus’ influential commentary on the *Exercises* shows that a few centuries later the legend was alive and well. The “excellence” of the *Exercises*, Bellecus writes, can be deduced from the fact “that they were dictated by the most august Queen of Heaven.” Aloysius Bellecus, *Spiritual Exercises According to the Method of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. W. Hutch (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1883), 6. The legend can be traced not only in print, but also in the iconography surrounding the Society’s founder. Paul Dudon mentions, in connection with this, a painting commissioned by Vitelleschi in 1625, which shows Ignatius kneeling in front of the Virgin with a pen in his hand, as well as Grau’s marble bas-relief on the altar in the chapel in the cave in Manresa where Ignatius lived, and where the dictation is supposed to have taken place. Cf. Paul Dudon, *Saint Ignace de Loyola* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1934), 275–6.

<sup>14</sup> My own summary of the *Exercises*’ genesis follows the one proposed by Ignacio Iparaguirre in his introduction to the *Obras completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*. See, also, Santiago Arzubialde, *Ejercicios espirituales de San Ignacio. Historia y análisis* (Bilbao: Sal Terrae, 2009).

Ignatius' four-month stay in Montserrat, where he arrived after leaving the family's castle and where a Benedictine by the name of Jean Chanones guided him through the practice of Cisneros' *Ejercitatorio de la vida espiritual* (1500).<sup>15</sup> The *Ejercitatorio*, a compendium of meditative exercises based largely on Jan Mombaer's *Rosetum*, was Ignatius' introduction to the ascetical literature in circulation throughout Europe since the late medieval period and to the tradition of the septenaries, the week-long meditations proposed, among others, by Mombaer and Zerbolt.<sup>16</sup> According to Ignacio Iparraguirre, the practice of the *Ejercitatorio* was also crucial in that it provided Ignatius with the kind of material on which he had learned to reflect during his convalescence: like the thoughts he conjured while on his sickbed, the meditations prescribed by Cisneros' book also elicited a series of affective responses. Chanones assisted him with their dissection, and along with certain passages from Cisneros' work, the observations Ignatius shared with him are also known to have made their way into his notebook.<sup>17</sup>

Following his stay in Montserrat, Ignatius arrived in Manresa, the site of the famous illumination he experienced on the banks of the river Cardoner. The *Acta* recounts how on his way to a church on the outskirts of the town, Ignatius sat down to gaze at the river when all of a sudden "the eyes of his understanding began to be opened." At that point, the *Acta* states, "he understood and knew many things, spiritual things just as much as matters of faith and learning, and this with an enlightenment so strong that all things seemed new to him."<sup>18</sup> This illumination, as some scholars have argued, had a profound impact not only on Ignatius himself. As Iparraguire writes, what Ignatius had recorded in his notebook in the family's castle and as Chanones guided him through the practice of Cisneros' *Ejercitatorio* crystallized, as a result of this experience, into "a vital structure and unity of a higher order."<sup>19</sup>

The next stage of the *Exercises'* evolution culminates in the composition of the text that would become the basis for what is known as the

<sup>15</sup> Francisco García de Cisneros, *Ejercitatorio de la vida espiritual* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1957).

<sup>16</sup> These septenaries would later be the source of the division of the *Exercises* into weeks. Cf. Jean Leclercq, "Exercices Spirituels," *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, vol. 4 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1937–1995), 1931–2. See, also, Iparraguirre's introduction to the *Exercises* in the *Obras completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, 131–5.

<sup>17</sup> Iparraguirre, 135.

<sup>18</sup> *Acta*, 30.

<sup>19</sup> Iparraguirre, 136.

*Versio prima*, a rough Latin translation dating from 1534. Judging from this translation, one can assume that its lost original, which scholars date from 1531, contained the first recognizable version of the *Exercises*. It is at this point, in other words, that the raw material assembled in the first stage and transfigured by the divine illumination in the second stage is arranged with a view to sketching a contemplative itinerary for others to follow.<sup>20</sup> The text that resulted from this process would be subjected to a series of translations and revisions up until the moment in which it was approved by the Pope. The approval was given in 1548, and the book was printed shortly after. The work that Ignatius did on the text bears witness to his administration of the *Exercises* to future Jesuits studying with him in Paris and, following the Society's official recognition in 1540, to aspiring Jesuits in Rome. To this period belong the *Vulgata*, the *Versio prima*, and the Spanish autograph that is now regarded as the authoritative text.

Written over a period of twenty years, the *Exercises* are afflicted by multiple discontinuities. This is one of the reasons why many find that the book, to echo John O'Malley's formulation, "fails to entice."<sup>21</sup> As O'Malley suggests, no just assessment of the *Exercises* can disregard "the conditions in which [they] came into being."<sup>22</sup> Another reason that is often cited is Ignatius' dry style. Ignatius might have enjoyed a well-written novel in his youth, and later in his life he might have recognized the value of rhetoric in the dissemination of Christian doctrine, but he does not seem to have had any literary aspirations of his own. There is little evidence in the *Exercises* of a desire to delight others through eloquence.

As has often been remarked, and as O'Malley himself remarks, the *Exercises* were "never meant to be read."<sup>23</sup> The fate of the *Vulgata*, the Latin translation of the *Exercises* that André des Freux submitted for papal approval in 1548, is worth considering in this regard. Working with the

<sup>20</sup> As Iparraguirre's notes, in the decade that followed Ignatius' stay in Manresa, a text that was meant only for his own private use was transformed into a text with a view to helping others. In Iparraguirre's opinion, this is the most "obscure" of the four stages of the book's composition, no doubt on account of the fact that it corresponds to one of the most obscure periods of Ignatius' life, a period that comprises not only his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and his studies in Alcalá, Salamanca, and Paris, but also his imprisonment by the Inquisition on suspicion of *alumbadismo*. The atmosphere of the learned milieux in which Ignatius found himself during this period makes itself felt in the text of the *Exercises*. Most of the technical terms one finds in it are thought to have originated in this period. *Ibid.*, 137–9.

<sup>21</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 37.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

papal censors in mind, Freux probably thought that infusing a measure of expressive fluency and coherence into the dry and disjointed original would win over the *Exercises'* more skeptical readers. The end result, as it turns out, has never been regarded positively. Joseph Munitiz and Philip Endean do not hesitate to accuse Freux of exhibiting a "preoccupation with elegance" that, even if it made the text more readable, resulted in a "lack of fidelity" to the original.<sup>24</sup> What Freux came up with was a text that meets a set of basic rhetorical expectations but that, precisely because of that, signals a betrayal not only of the way in which the text was written, but also of what it was supposed to be: the *Exercises*, the fate of the *Vulgata* suggests, are not meant to delight others or to be enjoyed in their own right; instead, they are meant to be used. If no just assessment of the *Exercises* can disregard the conditions in which they came into being, neither can it overlook "the kind of book they are and what they hope to accomplish."<sup>25</sup> The *Exercises* are a manual, a collection of instructions and notes delineating a method and addressed to someone who will be guiding someone else through a retreat.

This manual has three core components. The first one consists of a series of meditations that, except for a few variations here and there, follow a fairly stable pattern. A "preparatory prayer" (*oración preparatoria*) and a series of "preambles" (*preámbulos*) serve as a threshold into an imaginative engagement with the various "points" (*puntos*) in which the "narrative" (*historia*) with which the meditation is concerned has been conveniently divided. The meditation ends with a "colloquy" (*coloquio*) that asks the individual to speak to God "as one friend speaks to another friend, or as a servant speaks to his master."<sup>26</sup> In a testament to the influence of Cisneros' *Ejercitatorio*, the series itself is divided into four weeks, with the first week devoted to meditations on sin and damnation and the remaining three to Christ's Incarnation and birth, his life and Passion, and his Resurrection and Ascension, respectively.

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<sup>24</sup> See their introductory remarks to their translation of the *Exercises* in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, 281.

<sup>25</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 37.

<sup>26</sup> "así como un amigo habla a otro o un siervo a su señor." Exx, 54. What this speech might touch on is specified immediately after. One engages in it, we read, "at times in order to ask for some favor, at other times in order to accuse oneself of something badly done, or else in order to tell the other about one's concerns and to ask for advice about them [quándo pidiendo alguna gracia, quándo culpándose por algún mal hecho, quándo comunicando sus cosas y queriendo consejo en ellas]." Ibid.

The second of the *Exercises'* components is hinted at in the book's full title: "Spiritual exercises having as their purpose the overcoming of self and the ordering of one's life on the basis of a decision made in freedom from any ill-ordered attachment."<sup>27</sup> The *Exercises* aim to bring about a decision on the part of the one who goes through them. The nature and the conditions of this choice, its different modalities, and the various steps comprised within each are specified at the end of the second week, in the section devoted to the so-called Election.<sup>28</sup>

The third component consists of the apparatus of annotations, presuppositions, additions, and rules for praying, for dealing with sins, for the daily examination of conscience, for understanding the insinuation of scruples, and for confession and communion. Though differentiated from the Election and also from the sequence of meditations, this apparatus is not a mere appendix one could detach from the rest. In fact, two of the sets of rules included in it (the Rules by Which to Perceive and Understand to Some Extent the Various Movements Produced in the Soul and the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits) function as a hinge between the first two components.<sup>29</sup> The underlying presupposition of the *Exercises* is in fact rather simple. The exercitant can expect a set of "movements" to stir in his soul as he traverses the sequence of meditations. With the assistance of a spiritual director, he should "perceive and understand" these motions so as to eventually assign them to two opposing "spirits." This taxonomy will prove central to that "decision" that lies at the *Exercises'* core.

In his study of the *Exercises*, Roland Barthes writes that the program's division into four weeks marks an important distance with respect to the tripartite divisions favored by Christianity.<sup>30</sup> One can think, in this context, of the cosmos as a triptych linking hell, purgatory, and heaven.<sup>31</sup> More pertinent to the *Exercises* and to the realm in which they belong, we find the division of the quest for individual perfection into a purgative, an illuminative, and a unitive way. Given that this classification is at the center of the ascetic life, one should expect the *Exercises* to be informed by it.

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<sup>27</sup> *Exx.*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> *Exx.*, 169–89.

<sup>29</sup> *Exx.*, 314–36.

<sup>30</sup> Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976).

<sup>31</sup> Frédéric Conrod, *Loyola's Greater Narrative: The Architecture of The Spiritual Exercises in Golden Age and Enlightenment Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 47.

"Comment faire coïncider les quatre semaines avec les trois voies?"<sup>32</sup> Gaston Fessard's question echoes what is in fact already a central aim of the *Exercises'* earliest commentators: to show that the program's fourfold division is not at odds with the three ways. Suárez himself, to give but one example, would touch upon this question in his famous defense of the *Exercises*.<sup>33</sup> He begins, however, by asking whether Ignatius' book is at all informed by the division of the quest for perfection into the three ways. Can one speak, with regard to the *Exercises*, of a purgative, an illuminative, and a unitive moment?

The consensus, judging by what Suárez wrote, was that the first week corresponds to the purgative way, devoted to the subjugation of the passions through the cultivation of charity, and that the weeks that followed correspond to the illuminative way, concerned with a growing enlightenment about spiritual things. This omitted the unitive way, the summit of perfection, where the individual, cleansed of passionate attachments and instructed about spiritual things, can fix his mind on God.

What Suárez writes suggests that there were some who argued that, since the unitive way stands for the consummation of the ascetic pursuit of perfection, its absence from the *Exercises* was a sign of the book's imperfection:

Just as in this spiritual path one can distinguish between three degrees or ways—the purgative, the illuminative, and the contemplative—we see the first way being transmitted in the first week of exercises and the remaining meditations falling under the second way, the third way being entirely absent.... Now, our prayer and reflections must take as their point of departure other creatures and ourselves, progress through Christ's humanity, and have God himself as its goal, adhering to him with the entirety of our soul.... But in this work there are different meditations for the beginning and for our progress, about ourselves and other creatures. Nothing is said of God or of the manner in which one must think of his attributes or perfections, nor, finally, about how the soul might unite with him. From this standpoint, this doctrine can be considered, at the very least, imperfect.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Gaston Fessard, *La dialectique des Exercices spirituels de saint Ignace de Loyola* (Paris: Aubier, 1956), 28–36.

<sup>33</sup> Francisco Suárez, *Tractatus de religione Societatis Iesu* (Brussels: Greuse, 1858).

<sup>34</sup> "Item cum in hac via spirituali tres gradus seu viae distinguantur, scilicet, purgativa, illuminativa et contemplativa, prima traditur in prima exercitationum hebdomada; circa secundam autem reliquae omnes meditationes versare videntur, tertia omnino praetermissa.... nostra oratio et consideratio ita beat a creaturis et a nobis ipsis incipere, et per Christi humanitatem progredi, ut ad Deum ipsum in se terminetur, ei praecipue anima adhaereat.... in hoc opere de initio et progressu variae meditationes, tam de creaturis quam de nobis ipsis tradantur; de Deo ipso, aut modo cogitandi de attributis et perfectionibus

Even if in the end Suárez demonstrates that the *Exercises* are informed by the threefold division of the pursuit of perfection, that does not mean that the objection to which he is responding is entirely groundless. For one, only the first two ways are mentioned in the preliminary annotations.<sup>35</sup> The very impression that the presence of the last way is a matter of dispute—even if ultimately groundless, if one agrees with Suárez—reflects what I consider to be a deliberate attempt, on the part of the *Exercises*, to relativize the importance of the unitive way. The most “mystical” of the three, this is the way in which, according to Suárez, the mind, its attention fixed on God, can ponder his “attributes” and his “perfections” and also “how the soul might unite to him.” To say that the importance of these concerns is relativized is not to imply that they disappear. Instead, this relativization manifests itself in the importance that the *Exercises* assign to less exalted objects of knowledge than those comprised under God’s “attributes” and “perfections.” Indeed, the *Exercises* are concerned, primarily, with creatures, and this means that at stake in them, too, is a less exalted kind of knowledge than the one in effect in the unitive way, a knowledge based, precisely, on the images of those creatures.

The matter of Ignatius’ mysticism remains a topic of debate, certainly in light of Ignatius’ own ambivalence towards the kind of experiences one might bring under this rubric. Without a doubt, Ignatius held his own experiences in the highest regard, but he also seems to have recognized in them a certain danger.<sup>36</sup> The focus on less exalted objects and modes of knowledge, to which I just alluded, expresses this ambivalence, and it does so to the degree that at stake in them is the image, the entity that most vividly captures the perception of the mystical as “dangerous.” Barthes develops this last point eloquently while discussing the “radical imperialism” one can attribute to the imagination, the faculty in charge of the production of images, in the course of the *Exercises*. Barthes’ expression is meant to designate the way in which, in the course of the program, images come to “occupy” the entirety of the exercitant’s mental space.<sup>37</sup> The *Exercises* rest on a sustained production of images intended, primarily, “to combat relentlessly the vague and the empty.” This activity,

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eius, vel de modo unionis animae cum ipso nihil docetur; et ex hac parte dicetur saltem imperfecta doctrina.” Ibid., IX.6.1.

<sup>35</sup> Exx., 10.

<sup>36</sup> Ignatius’ own brushes with the Inquisition on suspicion of *alumbradismo* are certainly at the root of this ambivalence. Cf. *Acta*, 54–72.

<sup>37</sup> Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, 66.

Barthes writes, ends up placing the exercitant at a safe remove from the “void” often associated with the soul’s union with God. To posit the image as a “basic unit” and to foster its production in as systematic way as the *Exercises* do is thus “to forearm oneself against the suspect marginal zones of the mystical experience.”<sup>38</sup>

It was Aquinas who, in dialogue with Aristotle’s discussion of human knowledge, formulated the necessity of the image in terms that best show what is at stake in this defense against the mystical. The soul’s dealings with images, he suggests, are meant to reflect its own absorption in the corruptible world of creatures. As Aquinas claimed, because “the power of knowledge is proportioned to the thing known,” and because in our present life “the soul is united to a corruptible body, it is impossible for our intellect to understand anything actually except by turning to phantasms [*conversio ad phantasmata*].”<sup>39</sup> The soul has no direct knowledge of abstract universals. This knowledge is attained through the images of their concrete instantiations in things. On this basis, and translating the previous remarks, one might argue that the defense against the mystical is found in things as they are reflectively assimilated through their images.

The meditations that form part of the first of the two core components of the *Exercises* have their basis on a ‘narrative’ (*historia*) that the text divides into a set of ‘points’ (*punctos*). The exercitant is expected to bring this narrative to life with the help of his imagination. Not surprisingly, the imagination’s role in the *Exercises* has been the subject of intense critical scrutiny. Antonio De Nicolás speaks of it as a technology for a transformation of human bodies, which he considers to be part of the more comprehensive transformation of the whole person that the *Exercises* aim to bring about.<sup>40</sup> Pierre-Antoine Fabre, for his part, focuses on the elusive and ambiguous “place of the image” in the spirituality of Ignatius and of those closest to him. His analysis pays close attention to the relation between the program’s use of images and the visual apparatus that would grow around it.<sup>41</sup> When it comes to the imagination as a reflection of the soul’s existence among things, however, it is Annemiek

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>39</sup> ST, I, q. 84, art. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Antonio T. De Nicolas, *Ignatius De Loyola, Powers of Imagining: A Philosophical Hermeneutic of Imagining Through the Collected Works of Ignatius De Loyola With a Translation of These Works* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).

<sup>41</sup> Pierre-Antoine Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola: le lieu de l’image. Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artistiques jésuites de la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1992).

van Campen's brief study that proves most suggestive. Her words echo Barthes' account of the image with reference to the mystical: "The vacuum and the emptiness sought by 'negative' spirituality," she writes, "are filled by the imagination."<sup>42</sup> Images come to occupy the "void" associated with the most exalted forms of contemplation, however, not so much because of the sense that this emptiness is dangerous, but because what is most essential to the *Exercises* demands it. The emphasis on the imagination, Campen suggests, is in accord with the "this-worldly choice" that lies at the very heart of the program.<sup>43</sup> Campen is referring, of course, to the Election, a choice that is "this-worldly" in that it concerns the things of this world. The book's Principle and Foundation is quite explicit about this:

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by these means to save his soul. The other things on the face of the earth are created for man, and in order to help him pursue the end for which he is created. It follows from this that man is to use created things insofar as they help him towards his end and to reject them insofar as they stand in the way of it.<sup>44</sup>

Certain of the things "on the face of the earth" can be of assistance as one goes in pursuit of one's ultimate end—the choice that the exercitant will be eventually asked to make concerns, indeed, one such thing. If, as Campen argues, the emphasis on the imagination is in accord with this choice in its "this-worldliness," it is presumably because it is itself "this-worldly." It, too, exists in relation to the things in the midst of which the soul, united to a corruptible body, finds itself in this life.

Can one conclude, on the basis of this shared "this-worldliness," that there is a relation between the imagination and this choice? This is the question that will orient my reading of the *Exercises* in what follows. As I

<sup>42</sup> Annemiek van Campen, "The Mystical Way of Images and Choice," *The Way* 103 (2002): 8.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> "El hombre es criado para alabar, hacer reverencia y servir a Dios nuestro Señor y, mediante esto, salvar su alma; y las otras cosas sobre la faz de la tierra son criadas para el hombre, y para que le ayuden en la prosecución del fin para que es criado. De donde se sigue, que el hombre tanto ha de usar de ellas, quanto le ayudan para su fin, y tanto debe quitarse de ellas, quanto para ello le impiden." Exx., 23. On the Principle and Foundation, see Michel de Certeau, "L'espace du désir, ou le 'fondement' des *Exercises spirituels*," in *Le Lieu de l'autre: histoire religieuse et mystique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 239–48; Joseph Bracken, "The Double Principle and Foundation in the *Spiritual Exercises*." *Woodstock Letters* 98 (1969): 319–53; Arzubialde, *Ejercicios espirituales*, 71–83; Philip Sheldrake, "The Principle and Foundation and Images of God," *The Way* 48 (1983): 90–96; Joseph A. Tetlow, "The Fundamentum: Creation in the Principle and Foundation," *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 21.4 (1989): 35–43.

noted in my introductory remarks, I am interested in exploring the way in which a preoccupation with the field of praxis—the very preoccupation that I consider to be condensed in the metaphor of the instrument—first insinuates itself in Ignatius' book. The question I just raised bears directly on this preoccupation. The choice under consideration in the *Exercises*, as the Principle and Foundation indicates quite clearly, concerns a problem that is itself of a practical nature: the 'use' (*uso*) to be made of those things that may help man in the pursuit of his ultimate end. Unanimously regarded as a central piece of the *Exercises*, the Principle and Foundation has been the object of intense critical scrutiny; with a few exceptions, however, the problem of 'use' has yet to receive the systematic attention it deserves. The same holds for the question of use in relation to the *Exercises* as a whole.<sup>45</sup> My decision to focus on this question, however, is not animated simply by a desire to remedy this neglect. Instead, I will show that it is through a reflection on the question of 'use' that we can best understand the nature of the relation between the imagination and the choice at the heart of the *Exercises*. Part of what I will argue is that the choice in question—a choice for or against a particular thing—is premised on a prior determination of the 'usefulness' of such a thing, and that the imagination plays a key role in this determination. In opening with a discussion of the imagination and of the images it brings forth, then, my reading recognizes the central place that the *Exercises* assign to the imagination. But it also opens in this way because the analysis of the imagination and of the images it brings forth leads directly to my central concern in this section—the 'use' of which the Principle and Foundation speaks—and ultimately to the central concern of this project—the field of praxis, expressed in and through the metaphor of the instrument. My reading of the *Exercises* thus joins those I mentioned above in that it, too, is interested in the imagination. But it departs from them (even those that underscore the "this-worldliness" of the imagination and its relation to things) in that it explores the imagination in its specific relation at once to the choice at the heart of the program and to this choice as a step in the direction of the 'use' of things.

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<sup>45</sup> Andrew Hamilton, "The Right Use of Creatures." *The Way* 26 (1986): 198–207, emphasizes the importance of the use of things, though not in the terms in which I do so below. My understanding of 'use' is, indeed, rather technical and, as will become apparent, owes much to Augustine's definition of this concept. Hamilton's concern is simply with what is to be done with and with the right attitude towards possessions. Though these questions are comprised within the problem of use, Hamilton seems to follow the common-sense definition of 'use' rather than its specifically theological counterpart.



## CHAPTER TWO

### FROM THE IMAGE TO THE SPIRITUAL PASSIONS

The exercitant does not confront the question of use right away. Indeed, prior to this confrontation, which takes place in the course of the Election, he is asked to embark on a series of meditations. These meditations have a clear pedagogical function. They aim to teach the exercitant about what he is asked to reflect on. This pedagogy, however, cannot be circumscribed to the topics they address. Also at stake in it are the ways in which the reflection on these topics might unfold. In meditating on this on that topic, the exercitant is also being taught how to meditate.

This simple but crucial fact must be taken into account if one is to claim, as I did towards the end of the last chapter, that the imagination plays a key role in the determination of a thing's usefulness. Because at its core each meditation consists of a stream of images, it follows that by the time the imagination plays such a role, the exercitant will have already made active use of it. The *Exercises* outline in great detail how this must be done, making it possible for one to argue that, as he progresses from one meditation to the next, the exercitant is being initiated into an 'art' (in the philosophical sense of the word, where 'art' is a synonym for *techné*): he is being furnished with a basic knowledge of the procedures and with the opportunity to practice the skills necessary for engaging in a productive activity.

Before I say what this art is and what its products are—for now let me anticipate that, although it concerns the imagination, images are not all there is to it—let me inquire briefly into the significance of the fact that the exercitant is initiated into it before confronting the question of use. In what follows, I view this fact as an indication that this initiation is a necessary step. The exercitant's confrontation with the question of use, in other words, is contingent upon his having made use of his own imagination in the manner specified by the text. One will want to know why this is so. In what sense does the use that the exercitant makes of his imagination in the time leading to the Election prepare him to make the choice that he will be asked to make then? Much depends on what the *Exercises* mean by use, a matter I shall address in due course. For now, I would like to take a closer look at the use that the exercitant makes of his imagination in the

meditations of the first half of the *Exercises*. What transformations can one detect, based on what the text says about those meditations, both in the manner in which the exercitant's imagination is mobilized and in his relation to the matter under consideration?

Let me begin with an analysis of the sequence traced by the first three exercises of the first week.

What the text refers to as the first exercise—the Meditation with the Three Powers on the First, Second, and Third Sins—proposes, as its name indicates, a reflection on damnation.<sup>1</sup> The exercitant, we read, should consider the sins of the angels, of Adam and Eve, and of any individual man, in a way that involves his memory, understanding, and will. Fessard refers each sin, respectively, to the transcendental, predicamental, and determinate dimensions of human freedom.<sup>2</sup> The sequence, he explains, enacts a progressive specification of the history of sin, gradually endowing it with a concrete content as it asymptotically approaches the exercitant, who is after all potentially no different from “any individual who has gone to hell for a single mortal sin.”<sup>3</sup> Mobilizing the three powers, with the will as the power in which the sequence climaxes, this specification is expected to affect one in a particular way: the recollection of each sin consists in the projection of a sequence of images that evoke it and which the understanding must consider carefully so as to then “stir up” the will. Everything indicates, however, that the intellectual apprehension proper to the will, the so-called “intellectual appetite,” is not the only response. The exercitant can also expect to be filled, upon encountering such instances of sin, with feelings of “shame” and “confusion.”<sup>4</sup>

The meditation that follows, known simply as the Meditation on Sins, builds upon this process. What distinguishes this exercise from the former is the way in which the reference to “any individual man” is definitively displaced by the exercitant in his concreteness. The exercitant is instructed, indeed, “to recall to my memory all the sins of my life, looking from year to year or from one period of time to another.” The text even advises him to recall where he has lived in the past, every person he has frequented, and any previous occupations.<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, the shame

<sup>1</sup> *Exx.*, 45–54.

<sup>2</sup> Fessard, *La dialectique*, 47–8.

<sup>3</sup> *Exx.*, 52.

<sup>4</sup> *Exx.*, 48.

<sup>5</sup> *Exx.*, 55–6.

and confusion that accompany the suspicion that one might deserve what any other sinner deserves—the culmination of the previous exercise—are both expected to intensify: the third point of the meditation asks the exercitant to pay close attention to “all the corruption and foulness of my body” and to then see himself as “an ulcer and abscess out of which have oozed many sins and evils and a very venomous infection.”<sup>6</sup> Ideally, this will be accompanied by “mounting and intense sorrow and tears.”<sup>7</sup>

The Meditation on Three Sins and the Meditation on Sins are meant to be performed, respectively, at midnight and in the morning, before being repeated after a mass and then subjected, at the time of the vespers, to a recapitulation. They are to be followed, in the evening, by the Meditation on Hell, the exercise in which every day of the first week reaches its climax.<sup>8</sup> The section of the text devoted to this exercise begins by asking the exercitant to imagine the “length,” “breadth,” and “depth” of hell. It then specifies how he should engage with what he can expect to encounter in the space reserved for the damned:

Point 1 This will be to look with the eyes of the imagination at the great fires, and to see the souls as though they were igneous bodies.

Point 2 To hear with one’s ears the wailings, howls, cries, blasphemies against Christ Our Lord and against all the saints.

Point 3 To smell with the sense of smell the smoke, the burning sulfur, the cesspit and rotting matter.

Point 4 To taste with the sense of taste bitter things, such as tears, sadness, and the pangs of conscience.

Point 5 To touch with the sense of touch, that is, how souls are licked around and burned by the fires.<sup>9</sup>

Within hell, we read, there are things to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch—here one should be careful not to think only of the imagination

<sup>6</sup> *Exx.*, 58.

<sup>7</sup> *Exx.*, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Arzubialde, *Ejercicios espirituales*, 223–232.

<sup>9</sup> “1.o punto. El primer punto será ver con la vista de la imaginación los grandes fuegos, y las ánimas como en cuerpos ígneos.

El 2.o: oír con las orejas llantos, alaridos, voces, blasfemias contra Christo nuestro Señor y contra todos sus santos.

El 3.o: oler con el olfato humo, piedra azufre, sentina y cosas pútridas.

El 4.o: gustar con el gusto cosas amargas, así como lágrimas, tristeza y el verme de la conciencia.

El 5.o: tocar con el tacto, es a saber, cómo los fuegos tocan y abrasan las ánimas.” *Exx.*, 66–70.

in terms of the impressions derived from sight, and to understand that it is the whole faculty of sense that falls under its jurisdiction. Each of the things mentioned in the text is imagined with an emphasis on the sense that seems to correspond best to its nature. The effect, to put it simply, is one of discontinuity.<sup>10</sup>

Can one associate a particular content both with the procedure that should preside over its representation and with the effects of this representation? I am interested here in the relation between the mobilization of the imagination I have just described and the question of *damnation*, the central concern of the sequence traced by the first three exercises. Even if in preceding exercises the images of damnation aim to intensify the exercitant's "shame" and "confusion," this relation extends beyond the "empathetic" response they elicit.<sup>11</sup> The imagination, in short, is not merely charged with the projection of a sequence of images capable of exacting a range of affections that seem consistent with what they portray. The very way in which this projection unfolds, and the effects to which it leads, must themselves be regarded as indications of damnation. If the *Exercises* really seek to implicate the exercitant in the narrative of damnation that they ask him to reflect on, they achieve this not simply by confronting him with the appropriate images, but also by asking him to mobilize his imagination in a specific way. This specific way of mobilizing the imagination (one that underscores a fundamental discontinuity between the images it brings forth) is itself part of what it means to be among the damned.

Can one expect *salvation* itself to be associated also with a specific mobilization of the imagination and with its corresponding effects? The answer to this question becomes apparent in the second week, the moment in the *Exercises* in which Christ makes his first appearance. Indeed, the very first exercise asks the exercitant to picture "a human king chosen by the hand of God our Lord" and to reflect on how "such an open and kindly king" exacts "homage and obedience" from those he calls to his service. The text goes on to ask the exercitant to consider, if this summons is indeed

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<sup>10</sup> On the basis of this passage, Nicolas establishes an equivalence between "imagining" and "dismemberment." "Ignatius," he writes, "conceives imagining as an act of dismembering the senses by running them in isolation through the image being made." Nicolas, *Powers of Imagining*, 42.

<sup>11</sup> I am alluding here to the work of David Freedberg, who writes of the *Exercises* that they proceed through a methodic enumeration of details "designed to rouse the empathetic emotions of the beholder." See *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1991), 179.

worthy of admiration, how much more admirable should be the vision of “Christ our Lord, the eternal King, and of the entire human race before him, as his call goes out to all and to each one.”<sup>12</sup>

Christ’s appearance on the scene marks the point at which a concern with damnation is displaced by the episodes of salvation history as recorded in the Gospel.<sup>13</sup> This shift in content, as it turns out, is accompanied by a shift in the procedure by which the exercitant is expected to imaginatively focus on this content and in the effect at which it aims. This is evident in the fifth exercise for the first three days of the second week. The purpose of this exercise is to allow the exercitant to run through the matter under consideration in the preceding four, devoted to Christ’s Incarnation and birth. This is to be achieved with the help of a technique that the Vulgate version of the *Exercises* refers to as the *applicatio sensuum*.<sup>14</sup> The technique consists in “passing the five senses of the imagination [*pasar de los cinco sentidos de la imaginación*]” over the images that were brought forth in the preceding meditations. For this purpose, the text provides four points:

Point 1 To see the persons with the sight of the imagination, meditating and contemplating their circumstances in detail, and to draw some profit from what I see.

Point 2 To hear with the sense of hearing what they say or could say, and to reflect within oneself to draw some profit from this.

Point 3 To smell and to taste, with the sense of smell and taste, the infinite gentleness and sweetness of the divinity, and of the soul, and of its virtues, and of everything else, according to whoever the person contemplated may be, and to reflect within oneself and draw profit from this.

Point 4 To touch with the sense of touch, for example, embracing and kissing the places where these persons tread and sit, always seeing to derive profit from this.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Exx.*, 92–5.

<sup>13</sup> *Exx.*, 101–17. Hugo Rahner’s remarks on the Christology of the *Exercises* continue to offer important insights into Christ’s place within Ignatius’ program. See his *Ignatius the Theologian*, 53–135.

<sup>14</sup> There is an extensive bibliography on the *applicatio*. In my analysis of this technique, I have relied on Philip Endean, “Aplicación de sentidos,” in *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, vol. 1 (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 2007), 184–92; Manuel Alarcón, “Aplicación de sentidos,” *Manresa* 65 (1993): 33–46; Antonio Guillén, “Imitating Christ Our Lord with the Senses: Sensing and Feeling in the *Exercises*,” *The Way* 47 (2008): 225–41; Arzubialde, *Ejercicios espirituales*, 359–66. Hugo Rahner also devotes an important chapter to the matter in *Ignatius the Theologian*, 181–213.

<sup>15</sup> “1º punto. El primer punto es ver las personas con la vista imaginativa, meditando y contemplando en particular sus circunstancias, y sacando algún provecho de la vista.

The conspicuous similarities between the *applicatio* and the Meditation on Hell have not escaped the attention of commentators.<sup>16</sup> Does the fact that both engage the individual senses sequentially mean that in both cases the differentiation serves a similar purpose? One cannot help but remark, though, on an obvious but significant difference: namely, that the *applicatio* works upon a set of already existing images. As the term itself suggests, the senses are *applied* to something else. The exercise's heading also makes this clear when it states that it is a matter of bringing the senses 'to bear upon' (*traer sobre*) the previous contemplations.<sup>17</sup> Instead of being unique to it, then, the content of the meditation is supplied by previous meditations. The fact that the *applicatio* is the fifth exercise of the day and that the third and fourth exercises are repetitions of the first two means, indeed, that in this fifth exercise one brings the senses to bear upon the whole of the day's imaginary stream.

Endean, in his survey of the *applicatio*'s reception, devotes important pages to the debate as to whether the technique sketches a more "elevated" form of prayer than the one represented by other exercises. Early commentators in particular seemed intent on understanding the *applicatio* in light of Bonaventura's conception of the "work of reparation" as set forth in his *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*. Bonaventura's treatise, as is well known, encouraged contemplatives seeking to expedite the mind's "return to itself as to the image of God" to concentrate on the image of Christ.<sup>18</sup> The purpose behind this encounter was to awaken the so-called "spiritual" senses, those perceptive faculties of the spirit that, although

<sup>16</sup> punto. El 2º: oír con el oído lo que hablan o pueden hablar, y reflitiendo en sí mismo, sacar dello algún provecho.

<sup>17</sup> punto. El 3º: oler y gustar con el olfato y con el gusto la infinita suavidad y dulzura de la divinidad del ánima y de sus virtudes y de todo, según fuere la persona que se contempla, reflitiendo en sí mismo y sacando provecho dello.

<sup>18</sup> punto. El quarto: tocar con el tacto, así como abrazar y besar los lugares donde las tales personas pisán y se asientan, siempre procurando de sacar provecho dello.

Coloquio. Acabarse ha con un coloquio, como en la primera y segunda contemplación, y con un Pater noster." *Exx.*, 122–6.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Endean, "Aplicación de sentidos," 185. See also his "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses," *The Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 391–418.

<sup>17</sup> *Exx.*, 121.

<sup>18</sup> Bonaventura, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, trans. Philotheus Boehner (Saint Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1956), II.1. Javier Melloni discusses the relation between Bonaventura's *Itinerarium* and the *Exercises*, framing it as a case of Ignatius' relation with traditional conceptions of the progress of prayer. Cf. *The Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition* (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2000), 34–47.

distinct from the corporeal senses, were nevertheless aimed at an understanding of the distinct qualities of the objects of knowledge proper to the spirit.<sup>19</sup> Bonaventura's assumption was that the soul would be transfigured in being allowed "to perceive the highest beauty, to hear the highest harmony, to smell the highest fragrance, to taste the highest delicacy, and to apprehend the highest delights."<sup>20</sup>

The belief that the *Exercises* echo Bonaventura's conception of the "work of reparation," Endean writes, would end up shaping the debate surrounding the nature and the purposes of the *applicatio*. Some commentators, like Polanco, Gagliardi, and Cordeses, were of the opinion that the *applicatio* did indeed represent a more elevated form of prayer, one that depended on the "spiritual" sensorium theorized by Bonaventura.<sup>21</sup> Others, like Gil González Dávila, viewed Ignatius' own admission that most of those who embark on the *Exercises* are not ready to deal with very delicate matters as a guideline for the interpretation of the technique: the *applicatio* might echo Bonaventura's language, but it is not situated on a higher plane than the exercises that precede it. Of these two views, it is the second one that would end up prevailing. Endean himself seems to be in agreement with it when he writes that it is necessary to challenge the opinion that any "interpretación seria" of the technique "se tiene que referir a un modo de oración de alguna manera elevado y extraordinario."<sup>22</sup> To regard the *applicatio* as the "ejercicio puramente imaginativo" he and others consider it to be, however, is not only to deny the *Exercises'* involvement with Bonaventura's spiritual sensorium.<sup>23</sup> The images with which the *applicatio* is concerned, at once those it works with and those it produces, must themselves differ, too, from the kind of image that the author of the *Itinerarium* has in mind. They are not, as some would claim according to a certain reading of Bonaventura's words, the spiritual images of a superior rational faculty. They are, instead, like any other image conjured

<sup>19</sup> For a recent overview of how Christian authors, starting with Origen, have conceived of the spiritual senses and of the epistemological and devotional implications of the concept, see the essays collected in *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*, eds. Paul L. Gavrilyuk and Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Bonaventura, *Itinerarium*, II.3.

<sup>21</sup> According to Endean, this trend is inaugurated by Polanco's *Directorio*. "Aplicación de sentidos," 186.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 187.

by the imagination, and thus like those images already conjured in previous meditations.<sup>24</sup>

This is not to imply that the *applicatio*'s effects are not unique. The technique, as I noted, works on an already existing stream of images. In contrast to what we see in the Meditation on Hell, there is something that precedes the *applicatio*'s selective focalization on specific sensory realms, and thus something to which the images refer, a substrate that allows one to view these images as parts of a more comprehensive whole.<sup>25</sup> This is not the case with the Meditation on Hell, which gives us only parts. The effect of discontinuity that the Meditation on Hell is bound to produce is thus displaced in the *applicatio* by an effect of continuity and by an “intensification” of the stream of images upon which the senses are brought to bear. The technique asks the exercitant to conjure for a second time a set of images that, upon being conjured for the first time, can be supposed to have left their imprint on his memory. These images, conjured in order to highlight the sensory valence of the initial set, are in turn fated to leave their own imprint. We can speak, then, of a sedimentation of impressions and of an increase in the sensory valence of the original stream of images. Without a doubt, the matter at stake in these images is not incidental to the process. Both the first and the second exercise and their repetition in the third and fourth exercises refer to the mystery of the Incarnation and to Christ's birth. The *applicatio* as the moment of a sedimentation of sense evokes, indeed, the divinity's assumption, as the Word becomes flesh, of qualities that can be assimilated by means of the soul's sensorium, and thus with the divinity's own availability for retrieval as an image.

However superficial it may turn out to be, the resemblance between the two procedures is nevertheless crucial. It allows one to affirm the existence of a fundamental continuity between them. The initiation into an ‘art’ that I have claimed to be at stake in the time leading up to the Election demands this kind of continuity. The very possibility of progressing through a series of stages towards the acquisition of specific knowledge

<sup>24</sup> Clearly, the debate on the *applicatio*'s interpretation shows this technique to be yet another matter in which the polemic surrounding the place of the mystical within the *Exercises* comes into focus. The imagination proves once again crucial to the elucidation of this place, yet rather than a question of the image's “radical imperialism,” of its capacity to fill an alluring but dangerous mystical void through its own proliferation, it is a question of the kind of image and of the kind of sensorium at stake in the technique. Arzubialde agrees with Endean. See *Ejercicios espirituales*, 360.

<sup>25</sup> Endean, “Aplicación de sentidos,” 185.

and skills is contingent upon it. Progress is measured, in the case of this initiation, by reference to what distinguishes the images brought forth in later stages. These images are more substantial, given their common reference to a whole.

It remains to be seen whether these more substantial images are the products of the art into which the exercitant is initiated in the first half of the *Exercises*. From the outset, the *Exercises* insist on calling attention to the affective responses that images can elicit. Thus, in the case of the Meditation on the Three Sins, the text, as I noted above, speaks of “shame” and “confusion” as two of the feelings that the exercitant can expect to experience during his reflection on damnation. The use one makes of the imagination during the *applicatio*, for its part, is also meant to be affectively charged. As one applies the senses to previous exercises, we read in one of the notes for the fourth week, “one should note and pause at the most important points and at the places where greater motions [*mociones*] and spiritual relish are experienced.”<sup>26</sup>

These motions are not the marginal incidences that they might initially appear to be; they are themselves essential to the whole program, as witnessed by the annotation that asks the director to make sure that his instructions are carefully being followed “should he become aware that the exercitant is not affected by any spiritual movements [*mociones spirituales*] in his soul.”<sup>27</sup> The mere absence of these *mociones* would seem to be a sure sign that things are not unfolding how the should be. Certainly it is this kind of claim that lies behind the tendency—evident already in the *Exercises*’ earliest practitioners and commentators—to regard the program as emblematic of a *theologia affectus* that, as its name indicates, privileges these affective responses. The image, according to this reading, exists for the sake of the motion that one can expect to experience while conjuring it.<sup>28</sup> This understanding of the *Exercises* is as problematic, however, as that which considers the image independently from the motions that accompany it. Indeed, when considering the ‘products’ of the art into which the exercitant is being initiated in the first half, we must speak

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<sup>26</sup> “notando y haciendo pausa en las partes más principales, y donde haya sentido mayores mociones y gustos espirituales.” *Exx.*, 227.

<sup>27</sup> “quando siente que al que se exercita no le vienen algunas mociones spirituales en su ánima.” *Exx.*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> A reference to the *Exercises* as the expression of a *theologia affectus* can be found in Michel de Certeau, “L'espace du désir,” 242. De Certeau is echoing Pierre Favre's assessment of the *Exercises*. Freedberg also hints at this kind of reading when he writes that the meditations in the *Exercises* are aimed to rouse the emotions of the exercitant.

neither of an image or a motion but of a dyad linking both. So, too, must we consider the use that the exercitant makes of his imagination and the images he brings forth in conjunction with the text's own inquiry into the origin, the qualities, and the impact of these motions. This inquiry can be found the Rules by Which to Perceive and Understand the Various Motions Produced in the Soul and the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, two sets of rules found towards the end of the text.<sup>29</sup>

The *Exercises* are clear about the nature of these motions. The title of the second set suggests that they are the work of two contrary spirits, the role of which is first detailed in the first two rules of the first set:

Rule 1 With people who go from one mortal sin to another it is the usual practice of the enemy to hold out to them apparent pleasures; so he makes them imagine sensual satisfaction and gratifications, in order to retain and reinforce them in their vices and sins. With people of this kind, the good spirit uses the opposite procedure, causing pricks of conscience and feelings of remorse by means of the power of rational moral judgment.

Rule 2 In the case of people who are making serious progress in the purification of their sins, and advancing from good to better in the service of God our Lord, the opposite of the first rule takes place, because then it is typical of the bad spirit to harass, sadden, and obstruct, and to disturb the soul with false reasonings, so as to impede progress, while the distinctive trait of the good spirit is to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and quiet, making things easy and removing all obstacles, so that the person may move forward in doing good.<sup>30</sup>

Aside from providing us with a general statement about the soul's openness to the continuous action of spirits, these two rules also give us a

<sup>29</sup> *Exx.*, 313–36. The bibliography on both rules and on the second set in particular is vast. Comprehensive overviews of the rules' elaboration and of their theological significance can be found in Leo Bakker, *Libertad y experiencia: historia de la redacción de las Reglas de discreción de espíritus en Ignacio de Loyola* (Bilbao: Sal Terrae, 1995); Arzubialde, *Ejercicios espirituales*, 587–752; Michael Buckley, "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment of Spirits," *The Way* 20 (1973): 19–37.

<sup>30</sup> "1<sup>a</sup> regla. La primera regla: en las personas que van de pecado mortal en pecado mortal, acostumbra comúnmente el enemigo proponerles placeres aparentes, haciendo imaginar delecciones y placeres sensuales, por más los conservar y aumentar en sus vicios y pecados; en las cuales personas el buen espíritu usa contrario modo, punzándoles y remordiéndoles las conciencias por el sindereße de la razón.

2<sup>a</sup> regla. La segunda: en las personas que van intensamente purgando sus pecados, y en el servicio de Dios nuestro Señor de bien en mejor subiendo, es el contrario modo que en la primera regla; porque entonces propio es del mal espíritu morder, tristar y poner impedimentos inquietando con falsas razones, para que no pase adelante; y propio del bueno dar ánimo y fuerzas, consolaciones, lágrimas, inspiraciones y quietud, facilitando y quitando todos impedimentos, para que en el bien obrar proceda adelante." *Exx.*, 314–5.

sense of the wide range of occurrences in relation to which it is possible to speak of such an action. The fact that the rules make a point of assessing these incidences through a distinction between two fundamental orientations (towards sin and towards virtue) is also not without significance: the very practice of the *Exercises*, as Guillén notes, implies the kind of progress towards virtue discussed in the context of the second rule; thus it is the second scenario, in which the bad spirit harasses, saddens, and obstructs, and in which the good spirit gives courage, tears, and quiet, that the *Exercises* have in mind as they reflect on the motions that stir the exercitant.<sup>31</sup>

The action of both spirits is classified according to a basic opposition between consolation and desolation. The former notion, mentioned in the second rule, is discussed at greater length right after:

I use the word ‘consolation’ when any interior movement is produced in the soul that leads it to become inflamed with the love of its Creator and Lord, and when, as a consequence, there is no created thing on the face of the earth that we can love in itself, but we love it only in the Creator of all things. Similarly, I use the word consolation when one sheds tears that lead to the love of one’s Lord, whether these arise from grief over one’s sins, or over the Passion of Christ our Lord, or over other things expressly directed towards His service and praise. Lastly, I give the name ‘consolation’ to every increase of hope, faith, and charity, to all interior happiness that calls and attracts a person towards heavenly things and to the soul’s salvation, leaving the soul quiet and at peace in her Creator and Lord.<sup>32</sup>

Desolation, we read in the following rule, is “contrary” to consolation both in its nature and in its effects. This contrary status, as Guillén perceptively observes, manifests itself also in the way in which the definition is articulated: in contrast to the clear and gradated order that structures the treatment of consolation, the discussion of desolation consists of a disorderly list of feelings and moods, one that includes “darkness and disturbance in the soul, attraction towards what is low and of the earth,

<sup>31</sup> Antonio Guillén, “Desolación,” in *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, vol. 1 (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 2007), 576.

<sup>32</sup> “Llamo consolación quando en el ánima se causa alguna moción interior, con la qual viene la ánima a inflamarse en amor de su Criador y Señor, y consequenter quando ninguna cosa criada sobre la haz de la tierra puede amar en sí, sino en el Criador de todas ellas. Assimismo quando lanza lágrimas motivas a amor de su Señor, agora sea por el dolor de sus peccados, o de la pasión de Christo nuestro Señor, o de otras cosas derechamente ordenadas en su servicio y alabanza; finalmente, llamo consolación todo aumento de esperanza, fe y caridad y toda leticia interna que llama y atrae a las cosas celestiales y a la propia salud de su ánima, quietándola y pacificándola en su Criador y Señor.” *Exx.*, 316.

anxiety arising from various agitations and temptations and leading to a lack of confidence and to an absence of hope and of love, a state in which the soul finds itself thoroughly lazy, lukewarm, sad, and as though cut off from its Creator and Lord.”<sup>33</sup> The definition, particularly towards the end, suggests an existential state or a frame of mind, but it is understood that such a state is the cumulative outcome of individual motions. The same holds true for consolation: underlying the state of tranquility and of interior happiness we find an interior *movement* drawing the soul to the love of God.

What is the relation between these *mociones* and the so-called passions? The question imposes itself in light of what the term “passion” is supposed to designate. Augustine furnishes us with a clue when he declares the word ‘passions’ (*passiones*) to be the best designation for “the movement of the soul that the Greeks called *pathe*.<sup>34</sup> Aquinas quotes this judgment approvingly in the *Summa*, where he sets out to elaborate a comprehensive theory of the passions. This theory locates these movements in the ‘appetitive’ part of the soul, the part that finds itself under the sway of the good as it is apprehended either by the intellect or the senses. While the good as it is apprehended by the intellect concerns the “intellectual appetite” or the will, the good as it is apprehended in objects of sense is the concern of the “sensitive appetite.” The passions, Aquinas explains, are passive potencies of the sensitive appetite, actualized in those movements by which the soul finds itself drawn to the good or evil in things.<sup>35</sup>

The text of the *Exercises* expects images to be accompanied by a set of motions. In itself, this dyad does not present much that is new. It is a defining feature of the theory of the passions, where the apprehension of the good in things is not restricted to their actual presence before the organs of sense. John Damascene’s conception of the passions as “a movement of the sensitive appetite when we imagine good or evil,” which Aqui-

<sup>33</sup> “escuridad del ánima, turbación en ella, moción a las cosas bajas y terrenas, inquietud de varias agitaciones y tentaciones, moviendo a infidencia, sin esperanza, sin amor, hallándose toda peresoza, tibia, triste y como separada de su Criador y Señor.” *Exx.*, 317. “Su presentación,” Guillén writes, “se describe como si se tratase de una serie de estados de ánimo yuxtapuestos o amontonados, de los cuales nos sentimos incapaces de hacer una ‘lectura’ precisa y nítida. . . . La definición que propone San Ignacio va dejando al leerla una sensación pretendida de confusionismo, desunificación interior y falta de aliento” (“Desolación,” 576).

<sup>34</sup> Better than the “affections” (*affectiones*) of which some spoke, and better also than Cicero’s “disturbances” (*perturbationes*): *De civitate Dei*, IX.4.

<sup>35</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 22, art. 2.

nas also quotes approvingly, is worth mentioning in this regard: after the concern with the good rather than with the true, this imaginative aspect sets the passions apart from perception, which at first sight they would seem to resemble.<sup>36</sup> The question, then, is whether incidences of the kind brought under the contrary notions of ‘consolation’ and ‘desolation’ can be classified as passions. Is the dyad that the *Exercises* have in mind of the same sort as that which discussions of the passions presuppose?

One is tempted at first to answer in the negative. To begin with, in the philosophical systematization of the passions, the activation of the passive potencies that the passions are said to be falls to an “external” principle: the good as it is apprehended in the things one confronts. What the *Exercises* say about consolation would seem to allude, also, to the existence of an ‘external’ principle, yet one of a markedly different sort. The motion that accompanies the image is the work of a spirit. In this sense, it is possessed of a certain independence from the image, something that a ‘regular’ motion would have difficulty in claiming. One should also mention that, particularly in the case of the “positive” sort, to speak of these motions as passions would amount to their debasement. Inquiring into the reasons that explain why even someone making progress in virtue goes through periods of desolation, the *Exercises* state categorically that such periods help us “perceive through experience that we cannot ourselves arouse or sustain overflowing devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation, and that everything is a gracious gift from God our Lord.” Referring to a consolation as a passion would debase the experience not only by denying its status as a gift. It would also assimilate this gift into the sensitive soul.

The reservations one might feel about a potential “debasement” of these spiritual occurrences can of course be placated if we remember the warning that Endean issues against the excessive spiritualization of the *applicatio*. What is spiritual about the spiritual motions is their origin, the fact that they are the work of spirits. As motions, however, they have a concrete somatic status. Ultimately they might not be defined, as is the case with those of which Aquinas speaks, by the “corporeal transmutations” they entail, but the fact that they often entail such transmutations is beyond dispute—the definitions that the text provides for both are

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<sup>36</sup> On this point, see Peter King, “Aquinas on the Passions,” in *Aquinas’s Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, eds. Eleonore Stump and Scott MacDonald (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 101–103.

sufficient indication in this regard. A compromise can perhaps be found, then, in the notion of consolation and desolation as ‘spiritual passions.’ The characterization of these passions as *spiritual* would serve here as a mark of their origin, and hence of the distance that separates them from both joy (*gaudium*) and sorrow (*tristitia*); their status as *passions*, however, implies that they entertain a relation, even if for the purposes of a distinction, with these two principal passions and with the domain of the passions as a whole.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> These ‘spiritual passions’ would of course have to be placed in relation to the entire discourse on the passions that the *Exercises* articulate, in a much more detailed and systematic way than I am able to do so in this project. For a fine treatment of the place that the *Exercises*, and Jesuit spirituality more generally, assign to the passions see Lucía Díaz Marroquín, *La retórica de los afectos* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 2008), 27–9; 81–3.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE USE OF THINGS

The exercitant, as I noted above, does not have to confront the question of use right at the outset. The question is only announced in the Principle and Foundation, and it is not until the Election that the exercitant proceeds to assess whether a particular thing can be of assistance in the pursuit of his ultimate end.

I offered an interpretation of the time leading up to the Election as an initiation into an art concerned with the production of a dyad linking a stream of images and a series of motions. In doing so, I touched upon a number of issues that take center stage in the existing scholarship on the *Exercises*: the significance of the reflection on sin, the *applicatio*, the language of motions, and the possibility that Ignatius is responsible for a *theologia affectus*. My reading of these more or less ‘classic’ issues aims to place them, however, in relation to the problem of use, animated as it is by the conviction that the structure of the *Exercises* in itself reveals something about the relation between its parts. By the time he arrives at the Election, the exercitant has learned how to imagine things differently. In so doing, he has also learned that in imagining things he can expect to be moved in a particular way. In order to understand why it is necessary for him to learn this before confronting the question of use, we will first have to establish what the *Exercises* mean by use. I can anticipate, however, that the thing whose usefulness must be determined also needs to be imagined, and that the image of this thing can in turn be expected to be accompanied by a set of motions. The question is what ‘use’ as the *Exercises* understand it has to do with this dyad.

While the *Exercises* have a specific understanding of the word ‘use,’ they are aware of what is by all accounts the authoritative definition of this concept. This definition can be found in the work of Augustine, notably in *De doctrina Christiana* and in *De Trinitate*. I use the word ‘authoritative’ to allude to the prestige and the impact of this definition, even if in the end my reasons for paying recourse to it are primarily heuristic. The question of historical influence deserves a more extensive treatment than I can give it here, and I will have to limit myself to a few decisive (but in my estimation sufficient) indications of it. What matters most, in

accordance with a certain understanding of the word ‘heuristic,’ is what this definition allows one to discover about the *Exercises*’ own use of the term. Even if in the end they depart from the ‘authoritative’ definition, we need to understand this definition in order to grasp this departure in its quality as a departure. I will thus consider this definition, before reflecting on its implementation within the *Exercises*, specifically in the context of the so-called Election.

What do the *Exercises* mean when, after declaring in their Principle and Foundation that man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God, and that by so doing he might save his soul, they state that man must “use” those things that help him towards this end and “reject” those that stand in the way of it?

As I just anticipated, the reference to “use” (*uso*) raises the question of the *Exercises*’ relation to the legacy of Augustine. Scholars have inquired into this relation, but their focus has for the most part been on the famous opposition, found in the eleventh of the *Exercises*’ famous Rules for Thinking with the Church, between “scholastic” and “positive” theologians. Augustine is mentioned there, along with Saint Jerome and Saint Gregory, as one of those doctors whose writings “move the heart to love and serve God our Lord in all things.” These writings are praised on this account, even though in the end the *Exercises* ultimately ascribe to the work of “scholastic” theologians like Bonaventura, Peter Lombard, and Aquinas the advantage of being able to avail themselves of the institutional wisdom recorded in the Church’s “councils, canons, and decrees.” Concerned with “defining” and “explaining” doctrine and with “combating” and “exposing” error, the scholastics are said to be better suited to meet the challenges of the *Exercises*’ times.<sup>1</sup>

Ignatius’ assessment of the two theologies can encourage the perception that the *Exercises* owe more to the writings of the scholastics, and at

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<sup>1</sup> “We should praise both positive theology and scholastic theology,” the rule reads, “for as it is more characteristic of the positive doctors, such as Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, and Saint Gregory to move the heart to love and serve God our Lord in all things, so it is more characteristic of the scholastics like Saint Thomas, Saint Bonaventure, the Master of the Sentences, etc., to define or explain for our times what is necessary for eternal salvation and for more effectively combating and exposing all errors and fallacies. This is because the scholastic doctors, being more recent, not only have the benefit both of the true understanding of Sacred Scripture and of the holy positive doctors, but while being themselves enlightened and illuminated by divine grace, they can avail themselves of the councils, canons, and decrees of our holy mother Church.” *Exx.*, 363.

first sight the evidence seems to point in that direction. Scholars have not failed to remark that the wording of the Principle and Foundation echoes various passages from the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.<sup>2</sup> The ambivalence that Ignatius showed towards the work of Erasmus (the figure with whom the positive doctors were most closely associated at the time) could perhaps be seen as further confirmation of this preference for a theology more concerned with explaining doctrine than with moving the heart. But the Principle and Foundation also owes much to Erasmus' *Enchiridion* (1503). A passage found under the fourth of the rules that Erasmus lays out for those seeking to combat "the evil of ignorance" serves as a good example in this regard:

As you hasten on a direct course towards the goal of the highest good, whatever you encounter on the way should be rejected or accepted according as it either facilitates or impedes your progress. In general these things fall into three categories. Some are so evil that they can never be considered good, such as to avenge a wrong or to bear ill will towards someone. These are always to be shunned no matter how great the advantage to be gained and no matter what the torment. For nothing can harm a good man except for evil alone. Some things, on the contrary, are so intrinsically good that they cannot become evil, such as wishing well to all men, helping one's friends by honest means, hating vice, and enjoying pious conversations. Some are in between, such as good health, beauty, strength, eloquence, learning, and the like. Of this last class of things none should be sought after on its own account nor made use of to a greater or less extent except in so far as it leads to the supreme goal.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ganss addresses the *Exercises'* debt to the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, notably to the second book's discussion of creation, in the introduction to his edition of Ignatius' works. See Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, ed. George Ganss (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 37–40. The opening distinction of Lombard's book, concerned with the question of use, should also be mentioned in this connection. Cf. Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, I.1.2–3.

<sup>3</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, "The Handbook of the Christian Soldier," in *Spiritualia*, ed. John W. O'Malley, *Collected Works of Erasmus* vol. 66 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 61. John Olin comments on the similarities between this passage and the Principle and Foundation while trying to challenge Pedro de Leturia's assessment of Ignatius' relation to Erasmus. Cf. John C. Olin, *Six Essays on Erasmus and a Translation of Erasmus' Letter to Carondelet, 1523* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), 79–80. Arguing that the Principle and Foundation dates from the years Ignatius spent as a student, Leturia has suggested that it reflects the speculative habits of Scholastic philosophy. Peter Lombard would, without a doubt, be included among the models to which he alludes. Leturia is more skeptical about the influence of Erasmus, against the opinion of those who speak of possible echoes of the *Enchiridion*. Interestingly, he suggests Alonso de Madrid's *Arte de servir a Dios* as another possible influence, and mentions Eguía's edition of the work in 1526. One wonders, however, why Ignatius' friendship with this scholar authorizes the inclusion of Madrid among the precedents and not Erasmus, considering that it was Eguía

The impact that Erasmus' influential treatise had on Ignatius' thought has long been a subject of debate. The book's first Spanish edition was printed in Alcalá in 1526; Miguel de Eguía, the printer, was a close friend of Ignatius. However, Ignatius' assessment of Erasmus is ambivalent: the Dutch humanist seems to have fascinated as much as repelled him. Conrod cites a crucial passage of Ribadeneira's biography where Ignatius embarks on a reading of the *Enchiridion*. In a parodic inversion of the beginnings of his own conversion experience, Ribadeneira writes that Ignatius noticed that upon picking up Erasmus' book and reading from it "his fervor became tepid and his devotion turned cold."<sup>4</sup> For Conrod, the explanation for Ignatius' "minimalist aesthetics" and for his outright rejection of literariness lies here: the eloquence of the Dutch humanist leaves Ignatius' cold, and it is in an explicit attempt to distance himself from the "elegancia en el decir" responsible for his reaction (according to Ribadeneira's assessment of the situation) that Ignatius ends up writing what Conrod—echoing the skepticism surrounding the artistic value of the *Exercises*—characterizes as having "no intended literary angle and no intention to please whatsoever."<sup>5</sup>

The way in which the *Exercises* position themselves vis-à-vis a set of basic rhetorical expectations owes more, as I have argued, to the kind of work that they are than to Ignatius' own assessment of rhetoric. Ribadeneira's portrayal of Ignatius' encounter with the *Enchiridion*, however, provides a definite indication of the book's impact, even if in the end this impact is measured negatively. Erasmus' work presents an instance of a preoccupation with elegance from which Ignatius will want to distance himself. Presumably he wants to distance himself from it because such a preoccupation is a form of vanity. Ribadeneira, however, tells us something different. The problem with Erasmus' work is that it promises but fails to do what the "positive" theologians are good at doing: instead of moving the heart, it leaves Ignatius cold. The *Exercises* reject this concern with moving the heart only at a textual level, devoid as they seem to be of any intention to please. Their performance, however, is entirely at

who was largely responsible for the dissemination of Erasmus' work in Spain. Cf. Leturia, "Génesis," 33–4.

<sup>4</sup> "se le comenzaba a entibiar su fervor y a enfriársele la devoción." Ribadeneira, *Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola*, 60. On this passage, see Conrod, *Loyola's Greater Narrative*, 31.

<sup>5</sup> Conrod, *Loyola's Greater Narrative*, 16. Ignatius' rejection of Erasmus explains, in Conrod's view, "the plain and dry style" of his text. The purpose of this minimalism "is to counter-attack the 'frozen intentions' of the father of humanism, and to reject his style along with his ideas" (32).

the service of this aim, as we see in that mobilization of the imagination culminating, precisely, in the manifestation of the spiritual passions. From this perspective, there can be no doubt that it is problematic to assume that Ignatius aligned himself wholly with the scholastics. Is it not the case that the *aim* of his meditations answers more to the aspirations of the positive theologians? Not only do the *Exercises* seek, even if by different means, to move the heart. As will become apparent shortly, they specifically seek to move the heart, like the words of the positive theologians, “to love and serve God our Lord in all things.”

The *locus classicus* for the theological definition of use is to be found in the opening book of *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine’s treatise on the interpretation of Scripture. Augustine, as is well known, does not define ‘use’ (*usus*) in isolation, but in opposition to ‘enjoyment’ (*fructio*). The context of the definition is important: it forms part of Augustine’s inquiry into things and into the kinds of love that different things demand. Indeed, use and enjoyment designate different ways of loving things, ways that are themselves determined by the things that are the object of such love.

To use something, as Augustine writes, “is to apply whatever it may be to the purpose of obtaining what you love, if indeed it is something that ought to be loved.” Enjoyment, on the other hand, consists in “holding fast to something in love.”<sup>6</sup> What distinguishes this love is that it is not with a view to anything other than what it loves: the things one enjoys, in other words, are loved for their own sake. This stands in opposition to the things one uses: the relation to them, initially at least, is one of ‘application’ (*applicatio*). This implies, as Augustine suggests, a kind of love, but the fact that it unfolds with a view to a purpose means that such love, unlike the love of what is to be enjoyed, is for the sake of something else.

Augustine suggests that the mode of relating to a thing should be in accord with the thing’s nature. To relate to a particular thing in a particular way (for example by clinging to it in enjoyment) thus requires an understanding of the thing as deserving of that particular love and of that particular love as that which it demands. The distinction between use and enjoyment turns out, in this sense, to be the correlate of a more fundamental distinction between two different kinds of things. One such kind corresponds to whatever has been created by God; the other kind includes

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<sup>6</sup> *De doctrina Christiana*, I.8. English version in *De doctrina Christiana*, trans. R. P. H. Green. New York: Oxford, 1996.

the three Persons of the Trinity and the Trinity itself, “a kind of single, supreme thing, shared by all who enjoy it.”<sup>7</sup> The fact that enjoyment is reserved for this supreme thing and that only this thing is to be held fast in love means that all other things are to be loved for its sake. Creatures, in short, are to be used.

Augustine writes that the things that are for our use “assist us and give us a boost, so to speak [*adiuvamur et quasi adminiculamur*], as we press on towards our happiness, so that we may reach and hold fast to the things which make us happy.”<sup>8</sup> Like the language of ‘application’ (*applicatio*), the language of ‘assistance’ evokes here those situations in which one strategically avails oneself of things and deploys them for specific purposes. In principle, this is an *instrumental* definition of ‘use,’ a definition in which use is the name of a *praxis*. This instrumental definition would need to be distinguished from its properly *hermeneutic* counterpart, to be found in the definition of use as a relation to creatures, a relation informed by the knowledge that, owing to their status as creatures, they are to be loved not for their own sake but for the sake of something else. It makes sense to speak of a *hermeneutic* definition in this context because what is at stake in it is a certain *understanding* of the created order and of one’s existence within that order.

In the end, though, the distinction is only relative. The understanding of the created order that use designates in its hermeneutic definition might very well be a *praxis* unto itself. Consider, in this context, Augustine’s well-known discussion of life on earth as a pilgrimage, a journey back to one’s original homeland. As travelers longing to return there, Augustine writes, we should not allow “the delights of the journey” (*amoenitates itineris*) to detain us; that would only prolong our “estrangement” (*alienatio*) and our misery.<sup>9</sup> Instead of “perversely enjoying things,” we should take care to use them. Finding ourselves among creatures, we should love them in a manner that recognizes and takes advantage of their own capacity to lead us back to where we long to return. Such a return should be the aim of this love, which in this sense would be another word for a salvific *praxis*, with the things of this world serving as instruments.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., I.10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., I.7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., I.8.

<sup>10</sup> My distinction between a hermeneutic and an instrumental understanding of things echoes the remarks of certain commentators who consider Augustine’s concept of use to be endowed with both an ‘ontological’ and an ‘instrumental’ significance. Cf. Oliver

It is worth asking where what we normally understand by praxis—the concrete acts of use in which humans engage as part of their existence in the world—stands in relation to this hermeneutic praxis. This hermeneutic praxis, as I have noted, aims at a certain *understanding* of the created order. It is concerned, primarily, with the disclosure of the referential economy in which things are implicated. The created order, however, is more than an ensemble of things to be grasped in terms of this economy. It is also the milieu where one engages with things in the form of the concrete acts of use I just mentioned. Augustine was well aware of this. The relation between the use that designates a hermeneutic praxis and an understanding of creation, on the one hand, and these concrete acts of use, on the other, is in fact a central preoccupation of the theology of use that he begins to sketch in *De doctrina* and that he takes up in *De Trinitate*, his essay on the Trinity.

The distinction between use and enjoyment comes to the fore in Book X of *De Trinitate*. In its most general outlines, what we read is no different from what we read in *De doctrina*; reference continues to be decisive for the definition of use.<sup>11</sup> What is different is the realm with which the discussion of use is concerned. *De Trinitate* has a much wider scope than *De doctrina*, which is primarily a treatise on the interpretation of Scripture; concerned with the mind's status within the conception of man's creation in God's image, it presents an entire philosophy of cognition, which is precisely where the discussion of use is to be found. Augustine's efforts to sketch a "theological epistemology" explain this shift in focus. Previously centered on the things that populate the world, the discussion of use comes to be centered in "those things that are contained in the memory" and of which the will is free "to dispose."<sup>12</sup>

The transition can be approached in terms of *De Trinitate*'s own distinction between an outer and an inner trinity: (1) the things of this world, Augustine writes, produce (2) impressions as (3) the will fixes the attention

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O'Donovan, "Usus and Fruition in Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* I.1," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 33, no. 2 (1982): 361–397.

<sup>11</sup> Augustine writes that to use is "to take up something into the power of the will," while to enjoy "is to use with the joy, not of hope, but of the actual thing." In enjoyment, by contrast, the will "finds pleasure" in what it takes up "as an end," while the one who uses "has sought after that which he takes up into the power of the will, not on account of the thing itself, but on account of something else." *De Trinitate*, X.II.17. English version in *On the Trinity*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, trans. Stephen McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Cf. Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

of the senses on them; these (1) impressions are in turn said to give rise to (2) images whenever (3) the will calls them to mind: memory, image, and will are in this way “drawn together [*coguntur*] into unity,” and it is by reference to this “combination [*coactus*]” that they “are called thought [*cogitatio*.]”<sup>13</sup> Interested as Augustine is in thought, however, his discussion does not confine itself to purely ‘noetic’ matters: the projection of images within the mind, he suggests, unfolds with a view to a return to the world in which the things represented by those images are found: the noetic trinity exists “for the purpose of using” these things.<sup>14</sup> The ‘use’ at stake here is decidedly practical. Things are used in order to do something that needs to be done. This becomes apparent, precisely, when it is time to specify the relation between the operations of the noetic trinity and this use:

For no one could use these things...unless the images of sensible things were retained in the memory, and unless the will for the most part dwells in the higher and more inward things, and unless the same will...refers whatever it takes from them to a better and truer life, and rests in that end upon which it gazes, and for the sake of which it judges that these things ought to be done.<sup>15</sup>

While in perception the will confines itself to directing the attention of the senses towards things, in thought the will is in charge of summoning into being the images (those “higher” and “more inward” things) that are generated from the impressions stored in the memory. This fundamental homology between the inner and outer trinities would seem to be disrupted, however, when the will confronting the images it has summoned into being proceeds to “refer whatever it takes from them” to a happier life. If the will of someone who finds himself engaged in the act of seeing, Augustine writes, is “not at all the will itself of the man that has no other end except happiness,” it is because his will cannot exceed the “passing act” of perception. This passing act is replicated within the noetic trinity—it corresponds to the projection of the image—but it is supplemented by the attempt to establish a reference to an ultimate end:

It is just as if anyone wishes to see a scar in order to learn from it that there had been a wound, or if he wishes to see a window in order to see the passers-by through the window. All these and other such acts of the will

<sup>13</sup> *De Trinitate*, XI.3.6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, XI.4.7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, XI.5.8.

have their own proper ends, which are referred to the end of that will, by which we wish to live happily and arrive at that life which is not referred to anything else, but is sufficient in itself...<sup>16</sup>

If the use of things in the world depends on this operation, it is because this operation discloses the end by reference to which it can be said that something ought to be done. The notion of a will that “refers” a thing whose image it summons into being to an end recalls, of course, the kind of use discussed in *De doctrina*, where it was the things in the world that were under consideration. One’s engagement with things within the frame of concrete acts of use would thus seem to depend on an *internalization* of the hermeneutic praxis designated by ‘use,’ with images in the mind occupying the position of things as the condition of possibility of a reference to an end. Reference, in this inner realm, designates the will in the act of exceeding itself in its quality as a “passing act.”

We are now in possession of a full account of the notion of use. This account, as I noted, is necessary not only to do justice to the complexity of Augustine’s own theology of use, but also to the effort to determine how the *Exercises* position themselves with respect to this theology. A quick glance at the Principle and Foundation, which speaks explicitly of the ‘use’ of creatures, serves to confirm the heuristic relevance of this theology. The particularities of the *Exercises*’ position vis-à-vis this theology, however, only become apparent in the context of the Election, the moment in the program in which the exercitant finally confronts the question of the use of things. I have already shown that in Augustine’s account this use rests on the encounter with an image of a thing and on the will’s ability to exceed the “passing act” that makes this encounter possible. Is the same true of the Election?

The Election might be the most decisive of the “iterations” of the Principle and Foundation that, according to Michel de Certeau, one can find throughout the *Exercises*.<sup>17</sup> At the very least, and as its preamble indicates, it unfolds under the presupposition that one’s life must reflect the ultimate end that is mentioned there: “In every good election, insofar as it depends on us, the eye of our intention must be simple, looking only at that for which I have been created, namely, the praise of God our Lord

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., XI.6.10.

<sup>17</sup> De Certeau writes that it is possible to find “des rappels ou des équivalents plus discrets” of the Principle and Foundation. “L’espace du désir,” 243.

and the salvation of my soul.”<sup>18</sup> The Election is the moment in the *Exercises* when the exercitant must determine how a particular “thing” of the kind spoken of in the Principle and Foundation, a thing about which he must reach a decision, relates to this purpose. The very outcome of the decision (the thing’s use or its rejection) can itself be shown to rest on this relation. By way of example, the text mentions marriage and a life within the church. On the basis of the preceding specification of life’s ultimate end, one can anticipate that the exercitant must determine whether they constitute appropriate means. That requires viewing them, precisely, as means: instead of the delights of married life or the prospect of benefices, one should decide in favor of marriage or of life as an ordained member of the church by considering whether each path offers one a chance of being of service to God: “Whatever I end up choosing,” we read, “must help me towards the end for which I have been created, so that I must not make the end fit the means, but subordinate the means to the end.”<sup>19</sup>

As is already apparent from these two examples, it is important not to think of the ‘things’ under consideration in the Election exclusively as ‘entities’ that one finds in the world. Marriage is not, strictly speaking, a thing, nor is life as an ordained member of the church. It is perhaps more accurate to say that the Election concerns, instead, the possibilities, or paths, that certain elements of the created order, from actual entities to institutions, may open for one, and that the decision for or against them, the decision to ‘use’ them or ‘reject’ them, is meant to reflect the extent to which these paths would seem to lead to the attainment of one’s ultimate end. At the same time, it is significant that the *Exercises* speak of ‘things’ (*cosas*). I would argue that the term serves as an indication that whatever might be under consideration can be related to a concrete entity, and hence that it can be imagined.

The pages that the *Exercises* devote to the Election lay out a protocol, the purpose of which is to determine whether the subordination to the ultimate end that is required of a means is in effect in the thing under consideration. They begin by speaking of the three ‘times’ (*tiempos*) in which a “sound and good election” can be made:

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<sup>18</sup> “En toda buena elección, en quanto es de nuestra parte, el ojo de nuestra intención debe ser simple, solamente mirando para lo que soy criado, es a saber, para alabanza de Dios nuestro Señor, y salvación de mi ánima.” *Exx.*, 169.

<sup>19</sup> “y así cualquier cosa que yo eligiere, debe ser a que me ayude para el fin para que soy criado, no ordenando ni trayendo el fin al medio, mas el medio al fin.” *Ibid.*

1st time This is when God Our Lord so moves and attracts the will that without doubting or being able to doubt, such a dedicated soul follows what is shown, just as Saint Paul and Saint Matthew did when they followed Christ Our Lord.

2nd time A time when sufficient light and knowledge is received through experience of consolations and desolations, and through experience of the discernment of different spirits.

3rd time This is a tranquil time. One considers first of all the purpose for which human beings exist, viz. to praise God Our Lord and to save their souls. Desiring this end, one chooses as means some life or state within the limits set by the Church, in order to find thereby the help to the service of one's Lord and the salvation of one's soul.

I called this a tranquil time, as then the soul is not disturbed by different spirits and can use her natural powers freely and calmly.<sup>20</sup>

The three times are in reality three modalities. A thing's fittingness as a means can be communicated directly and in a way that leaves no room for uncertainty, conveyed through the discernment of the kinds of motions discussed above, or else deduced rationally and in accordance with the logic of means and ends.

From the outset, in the first of the preliminary annotations to the text, the *Exercises* claim to be able to aid one in “seeking and finding” God’s will “in regard to the disposition of one’s life.”<sup>21</sup> This search presupposes not only that God’s will can be found but also that it communicates itself. The fifteenth of the preliminary annotations elaborates on this point as it specifies how much the director should try to influence the exercitant:

Although outside of the exercises we are lawfully and meritoriously able to move all who seem suitable to choose continence, virginity, religious life, and every form of evangelical perfection, during these spiritual exercises it is more opportune and much better that the Creator and Lord communicate

<sup>20</sup> “1.o tiempo. El primer tiempo es quando Dios nuestro Señor así mueve y atrae la voluntad, que sin dubitar ni poder dubitar, la tal ánima devota sigue a lo que es mostrado; así como San Pablo y San Matheo lo hicieron en seguir a Cristo nuestro Señor.

2.º tiempo. El segundo: cuando se toma asaz claridad y cognoscimiento por experiencia de consolaciones y desolaciones, y por experiencia de discreción de varios espíritus.

3.º tiempo. El tercero tiempo es tranquilo, considerando primero para qué es nascido el hombre, es a saber, para alabar a Dios nuestro Señor y salvar su ánima, y esto deseando elige por medio una vida o estado dentro de los límites de la Iglesia, para que sea ayudado en servicio de su Señor y salvación de su ánima.

Dixe tiempo tranquilo, quando el ánima no es agitada de varios spíritus y usa de sus potencias naturales libera y tranquilamente.” *Exx.*, 175–7.

<sup>21</sup> *Exx.*, 1.

Himself to the faithful soul in search of the will of God, as He inflames it with his love and praise, disposing it towards the way in which it will be better able to serve Him in the future.<sup>22</sup>

The *Exercises* view the communication of God's will as "a practical possibility of experience."<sup>23</sup> We owe this phrase to Karl Rahner, the theologian who has offered the most philosophically and theologically complex account of the Election's three times. The will whose communication the *Exercises* presuppose, Rahner explains, concerns the question of "what I must do [*lo que debo hacer*]" in the face of the possibility or the possibilities that a particular thing opens for one.<sup>24</sup> With this question in mind, Rahner claims that what comes under scrutiny in the Election is an "object of moral choice" or an "object sought as a moral goal." The instances that exemplify the first of the three modalities, he goes on to argue, correspond to an immediate and absolutely certain revelation of the answer to the question of what one must do. Truly exceptional, however, they are mentioned purely so as to avoid the accusation that one is denying their possibility; an ordinary person is definitely not expected to go through an experience like it. The "dilemma" that interests Rahner—and which he considers to be the *Exercises'* most significant "provocation" to all forms of "theological pride"—has its origin here.<sup>25</sup> The extraordinary nature of the first time, he writes, means that the object of choice "must be comprised in the fact themselves" and hence something other than "an ordinance of God transcending them and freely disposing of them," which is what we see in the first modality. This more ordinary determination of the object is split into two, however, with the third or "tranquil" time as the modality that proceeds through a deduction on the basis of universal principles.<sup>26</sup> This is of course a perfectly legitimate way not only of determining an "object of moral choice" but also of arriving at an answer to the question

<sup>22</sup> "Porque, dado que fuera de los exercicios lícita y meritoriamente podamos mover a todas personas, que probabiliter tengan subiecto, para elegir continencia, virginidad, religión y toda manera de perfección evangélica; tamen, en los tales exercicios spirituales, más conveniente y mucho mejor es, buscando la divina voluntad, que el mismo Criador y Señor se comunique a la su ánima devota abrasándola en su amor y alabanza, y disponiéndola por la vía que mejor podrá servirle adelante." *Exx.*, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Karl Rahner, "The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge in Ignatius of Loyola," in *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, trans. W. J. O'Hara (Herder and Herder, 1964), 94.

<sup>24</sup> *Exx.*, 180.

<sup>25</sup> Rahner, "The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge," 86.

<sup>26</sup> *Exx.*, 178–88.

of what one ought to do that can be assured—provided it falls under what the magisterium teaches—of its being in accord with God's will.

As Rahner argues, though, the very existence of the second time suggests that the determination of the moral goal, when not unfolding in an extraordinary way, does not have to rest on a rational operation. Echoing the privilege conferred upon this modality throughout the history of the *Exercises*' reception, Rahner writes that it is in fact the most desirable of the three, and concludes from this that the *Exercises* are interested in an object of moral choice whose recognition exceeds "the normal methods of discursive knowledge with the help of the general principles of Christian morals."<sup>27</sup> Instead, this recognition requires a discernment of the kind into which the exercitant's reflections on the motions of consolation and desolation have initiated him. The need for a "special disclosure" of the object is for Rahner an indication that the object itself is special, distinct from what one confronts in the other two times. Rather than a 'revelation' or an 'instance' of a universal maxim—corresponding, respectively, to the first and the third time—the decision at the heart of the Election concerns, in the second time that is also the ideal, those "concrete particulars" in and through which God's will communicates itself.

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<sup>27</sup> Exx., 108. Ponlevoy's *Commentaire sur les exercices spirituels de Saint Ignace*, published in 1889, offers an early example of the consensus regarding the first *tiempo*, unanimously declared to be too exceptional to serve as a norm: "Le premier temps est cité, parce que c'est un fait qu'on peut bien rappeler, et il devait l'être parce que c'est un droit de Dieu, qu'on doit sans doute reconnaître. Mais non seulement le cas est rare, il est à la lettre miraculeux... Ce premier temps ne peut qu'être extraordinaire et ce serait de l'ambition d'y prétendre et une illusion de l'attendre." The passage is quoted in Fessard, *La dialectique des Exercices spirituels de saint Ignace de Loyola*, 74. Rahner shares this view: "The first method," he writes, "is the ideal higher limiting case of the second." It is included in the *Exercises* to lend the Election a logical and a dogmatic consistency. "The third method," in turn, "is the less perfect mode of the second (and must be so regarded) and itself seeks to rise beyond itself into the second kind of Election." Cf. Rahner, "The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge," 106. The third time's "imperfection" and the first time's "ideality" eventually lead Rahner to see the second time as the one that Ignatius would have privileged. A provocative attempt to examine discernment "from the perspective of moral philosophy" and to assimilate it to the Aristotelian category of *phronesis* can be found in Gerhard Hughes, "Ignatian Discernment: A Philosophical Analysis," *The Heythrop Journal* 31, no. 4 (1990): 419–38. In a polemical counterpoint to Rahner, Hughes writes that the third time "might well represent the normal case, or at least a very common case," and that the "ultimate criterion" for the Election may very well be a "rational" one (433). Hughes agrees with Ponlevoy in seeing the first time, resting as it does on the precedents constituted by Paul and Matthew, as exceptional. If Ignatius mentioned it, he notes, it was out of "fidelity to Scripture" (432).

Once again, the fact that the Election concerns what one ought to do does not mean, as I suggested above, that it is not ultimately concerned with things. The text speaks, indeed, of “what I ought to do about the thing before me [*lo que yo debo hacer acerca de la cosa propósita*].”<sup>28</sup> Right from the start, in the first of the directives furnished by the text, we encounter a reference to the “things about which we want to make an election [*cosas de las cuales queremos hacer elección*].”<sup>29</sup> What one ought to do exists in relation to a thing, a word that must be understood here as a designation for a possibility whose status as one of those “concrete particulars,” in and through which God’s will communicates itself, must be ratified.

This thing, as we read, is “before” one. This way of speaking about things is in fact echoed repeatedly. The text indicates at one point that it is necessary “to put before myself the thing about which I want to make an election [*proponer delante la cosa sobre que quiero hacer elección*],” while elsewhere we find references to “the thing that has been put before me [*la cosa propuesta*]” and “the thing before me [*la cosa propósita*].”<sup>30</sup> Perhaps what is most striking about this formulation is its reference to an operation that returns ‘things,’ a capacious and ambiguous term if there ever was one, to the specificity that adheres to the notion of an “object” of choice. As Covarrubias explains in his *Tesoro*, the verb *proponer* means “to put something forth [*representar alguna cosa*] citing specific reasons.”<sup>31</sup> He is referring of the act whereby someone puts something forward for consideration and discussion by others—put forward in this way, the thing under consideration can be expected to acquire the kind of definition demanded by the effort to persuade through “reasons.” Covarrubias’ use of the word *representar* for this setting forth is, however, not without significance. Indeed, the meaning his *Tesoro* assigns to this word suggests that the thing’s appearance in front of one involves an act of the imagination: to represent is “to make something present to ourselves” not only through words but also “with figures that are fixed in our imagination.”<sup>32</sup> Previous references to the word *cosa* in the context of the activity of the imagination confirm this association.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Exx.*, 180.

<sup>29</sup> *Exx.*, 170.

<sup>30</sup> *Exx.*, 78; 79; 82.

<sup>31</sup> Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1611), 1233.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 1260.

<sup>33</sup> See the sections devoted to the famous *compositio loci*: *Exx.*, 47.

The Election aims to determine a thing's fittingness as a means or, better even, whether or not a thing is to be used. That an image of this thing would be implicated in this determination can only remind one of Augustine's definition of 'use.' As we read in *De Trinitate*, the determination of a thing's usefulness is premised upon a mental operation that rests, also, on the confrontation with an image. I indicated, though, that Augustine also expects the will, beyond that "passing act" by which it calls an image of a thing to mind, to refer that thing to an end. The determination of a thing's usefulness thus rests, for him, on the confrontation with an image of a thing that the will can then refer to an end. Is the same true of the Election? We know by now that the *Exercises* are not concerned only with images, and that the time leading up to the Election seeks to initiate the exercitant into an art oriented towards the production of a dyad linking an image and a motion. No assessment of the *Exercises'* understanding of 'use' can forget this additional element, what I have been referring to as the 'spiritual passions,' precisely to the extent that it disturbs the referential logic at stake in Augustine's definition. As manifestations of a 'spiritual appetite,' these passions, as I hope to show, cannot be implicated in what is essentially a rational operation, the kind of operation in which one expects the will, as the 'intellectual appetite,' to be implicated.

One could expect the incidence of consolations in the wake of a thing's representation "in front of one" to be sufficient indication that the thing is conducive to one's end and thus a fitting and useful means. The *Exercises*, however, consider these motions to be open to distortion, stating that "it is typical of the bad angel, which may assume the form of an angel of light, to enter the devoted soul and to leave it with his own profit."<sup>34</sup> This kind of warning, an echo of a statement Saint Paul makes in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, can be found in virtually every discussion of the discernment of spirits (*discretio spirituum*).<sup>35</sup> In the *Exercises*, it serves to introduce the need for a standard by which to authenticate what might be no more than a deception: what the text refers to as a 'consolation without preceding cause' (*consolación sin causa precedente*).

Unlike the 'spiritual consolations,' the *Exercises* suggest, the consolation without preceding cause unfolds "without any previous perception

<sup>34</sup> "proprio es del ángel malo, que se forma sub angelo lucis, entrar con la ánima devota, y salir consigo." *Exx.*, 332.

<sup>35</sup> "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14).

or understanding of some object due to which such consolation, through the mediation of the person's own acts of understanding and will, could come about.”<sup>36</sup> The chief occasion in which God exercises his prerogative “to enter the soul, to leave it, and to arouse different movements in it, drawing it entirely into the love of his divine majesty,”<sup>37</sup> this consolation serves as the “principle and foundation,” so to speak, of the hermeneutics of discernment, capable as it is of instilling an indubitable certainty regarding its divine origin: as the *Exercises* insist, “only God Our Lord gives consolation to the soul without preceding cause.”<sup>38</sup> This stands in sharp contrast to the spiritual consolation, which might be a deception orchestrated by the devil. What spares the consolation without preceding cause this suspicion is its immediacy. At stake here is the scenario hinted at in the fifteenth of the preliminary annotations, which ask the one in charge of giving the *Exercises* to the exercitant “to let the Creator work directly with its creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord.”<sup>39</sup> Not only is the spiritual director expected to abstain, as was suggested before, from any effort to push the exercitant in a particular direction. This direct work concerns, also, the different mediations implicated in the communication of God’s will. Here lies the significance of the distinctive feature of this kind of consolation: its unfolding in the absence of a representation of an object. The consolation without preceding cause marks a caesura in the imaginary stream.

Where does this special occurrence fit within the process that begins with the appearance of the thing in front of the exercitant and continues with the analysis of the motions that accompany it? It is safe to say that this is one of the most challenging of the questions raised by the *Exercises*. However central to them, the matter remains shrouded in mystery and, predictably, an object of contention among readers of the *Exercises*.<sup>40</sup> Rahner’s solution is particularly intriguing. The divine consolation, he suggests, functions as the “starting-point” of its spiritual counterpart, and in

<sup>36</sup> “sin ningún previo sentimiento o conocimiento de algún objeto, por el qual venga la tal consolación mediante sus actos de entendimiento y voluntad.” *Exx.*, 330.

<sup>37</sup> “entrar, salir, hacer moción en ella, trayéndola toda en amor de la su divina majestad.” *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> “sólo es de Dios nuestro Señor dar consolación a la ánima sin causa precedente.” *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> “dexé inmediata obrar al Criador con la criatura, y a la criatura con su Criador y Señor.” *Exx.*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Bakker, *Libertad y experiencia*, 75–100; 223–38.

this way provides also the “ultimate criterion” for its authentication.<sup>41</sup> For the spiritual consolations experienced in the course of the confrontation with a concrete particular to be interpreted as God’s way of encouraging one “to choose and accomplish what God wants of us,”<sup>42</sup> they must first be confronted with and tested against what is ultimately an experience of “transcendence” or of “utter openness towards God.”<sup>43</sup> Rahner does not conceive of the relation between the imaginative representation of the objects and the motions that accompany it as a concurrence. For this reason he can point out that the Election is concerned, in the end, with a particular object and with its fittingness as a means, presumably as something separate from the motions it elicits. A distinction needs to be drawn, he suggests, between discernment, the process in which consolations are authenticated by reference to their origin, and the determination of the means proper. This determination requires one to return to the object. At this point, Rahner introduces a third term, to be found in one’s “will to the object.”<sup>44</sup> This will is the first of the two “attitudes” that come into play in the determination of the means, the other one being the “utter openness to God” experienced in the divine consolation. The determination of the fittingness of the means rests, Rahner explains, on a “synthesis” of the two: it is a question of establishing “whether the will to the object of Election under scrutiny leaves intact that pure openness to God in the supernatural experience of transcendence and even supports and augments it or whether it weakens and obscures it.”<sup>45</sup>

In this account, the so-called “will to the object” is something sufficiently distinct from the motions elicited by the object. This differentiation would seem to attest to the ‘external’ origin of the motions—to the fact that they are the work of spirits—yet it also serves to underscore the fact that, as I already suggested, the motions do not belong to the will. In its distinctness, the so-called “will to the object” reflects this basic differentiation, consistent with the fact that the motions are fundamentally passions. This, however, is not how the motions are traditionally understood, as is clearly apparent in the hypothesis—and here Rahner’s account is also exemplary—that the Election consists in a “synthesis”—between the “will to the object” and the divine consolation. The notion of a synthesis

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<sup>41</sup> Rahner, “The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge,” 157.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

presupposes a fundamental community of nature. To implicate the “will to the object” in a synthesis with the divine consolation is to suggest that the divine consolation is itself a form of will, and that this will and man’s will are of a similar nature. When the *Exercises* speak of God “communicating Himself to the faithful soul in search of the will of God as He inflames it with his love and praise,” one wants to think that this state of being inflamed with God’s love and praise is the form taken by the will for which the soul is searching—and, indeed, the references to the soul’s “searching and finding” God’s will suggest this to be so. But it could be that this searching and this finding are separated by a fundamental discontinuity and that what one searches for is not what one finds, or rather that one finds what one searches for but in its essential alterity, in other words, in the guise of a passion.

While this alterity suffices to call into question the very possibility of speaking of a synthesis, the language of synthesis might be worth preserving insofar as it marks a distance with respect to the language of *reference*. From the perspective of the Election’s determination of the usefulness of a particular thing, an appeal to this language might seem warranted, since reference lies after all at the heart of Augustine’s notion of ‘use.’ For Augustine, as we saw, the will that summons an image must “refer” the thing whose image it summons to what is to be enjoyed in love. Glossing Augustine, Aquinas declares reference to be, indeed, essential to the concept of ‘use,’ as well as that which establishes ‘use’ as the act of the will that it is said to be. He does so, however, with an awareness that this goes against what one might expect: quoting Augustine’s definition of use—“to refer that which is the object of use to the obtaining of something else”—he writes in the *Summa* that “‘to refer’ something to another thing is an act of the reason to which it belongs to compare and to direct,” and thus that use is “an act of the reason and not of the will.”<sup>46</sup> Aquinas then states that “the use of a thing implies the application of that thing to an operation [*usus rei alicuius importat applicationem rei illius ad aliquam operationem*].” This operation is an action that demands both the operation of the soul’s powers and a mobilization—often with the help of the body’s organs—of the thing in question. Both are the work of the will, the power that sets the interior ‘principles of action’ (*principia agendi*) in motion: “Hence it is evident,” Aquinas concludes, “that first and principally use belongs to the will as first mover.” Reason might “compare” and

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<sup>46</sup> ST, I-II, q. 16, art. 1, ad. 1.

"direct," and in that sense use, which requires such a comparison and such a direction, might be a rational act, yet even if reason "uses all things by its judgment of them," properly speaking "even the speculative reason is applied by the will," as is the case with any other power, to its own acts: "Consequently the speculative reason is said to use, in so far as it is moved by the will, in the same way as the other powers."<sup>47</sup>

The referential operation at stake in the 'use' of things might not suffice to turn 'use' into an act of the reason, but that does not mean that 'use' does not rest on a rational reference. Aquinas himself never claims the opposite. The fact that in the end it is the will that impels the reason to carry out the reference is what in the end establishes use as an act of the will. But then every operation is an act of the will, the soul's first mover. Why not distinguish use, then, by underscoring its fundamentally rational basis? What is crucial about this polemic is that, either as an act of the reason or the will, *use remains an act of the intellect*. When the will directs the reason, it is thus directing a power with which it shares a common nature. An emphasis on the passions, of the kind that is in effect in the *Exercises*, implies a movement away from the intellect. One remains within the appetitive dimension, but there is a clear opening onto a realm that is not that of the intellectual appetite. Instead of an image whose projection prompts the will to exceed its "passing act" and to set a referential operation in motion, what we have is an image whose projection is accompanied by a set of passions. These passions need to be discerned, presumably with a view to a synthesis. Much about this synthesis remains ambiguous; the nature of the entire operation and the steps involved in it are difficult to identify. Certainly it is not a matter of the culminating stage of the movement of dialectical reason, when the conflict between a thesis and an antithesis is resolved: Rahner himself indicates at one point that "it is obvious that the trying out of this synthesis requires a certain time," and explains that this has to do with the fact that "it is not merely a matter of a synthesis between the object of the Election and the 'object' of the fundamental divine experience."<sup>48</sup> Here Rahner forgets his previous clarification regarding the "will to the object." In any case, the quotation marks he uses in relation to the divine consolation are revealing. Only one of the terms of the synthesis has a properly "thetic" quality. The divine consolation, as we saw, is without object. It can in fact be said to mark a caesura

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<sup>47</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 16, art. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Rahner, "The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge," 159.

in the imaginary stream. Clearly, then, this is no dialectical synthesis. Is it something simpler, something along the lines of a ‘combination’? The fact that the two elements are radically heterogeneous, however, suggests this not to be the case, either. In fact, to speak of a radical heterogeneity would not do justice to the situation. The experience of “pure receptivity” stands for the dissolution of the other term. Thus it might be more appropriate, in the end, to speak of a catachresis rather than of a synthesis. These questions, even if they do not seem to lead towards an incontrovertible answer, do testify to the only thing that is certain: that reference remains a problem.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *AD MODUM LABORANTIS*

In most studies of the *Exercises*, it is the first two weeks and the Election that are analyzed in depth. This stands in sharp contrast to the often hasty and superficial treatment of the program's third and fourth weeks. Without a doubt, it is the sense that the *Exercises'* very nature is determined by the Election that accounts for this unfortunate neglect. The third and fourth weeks, it is often argued, do no more than to strengthen the exercitant's determination to proceed according to the choice he made in it. Iparraguirre, for example, speaks of the third and fourth weeks as aiming at "una más íntima compenetración y transformación del alma con el Señor" and at an "ordenación plena del propio amor."<sup>1</sup> While this kind of assessment is not intended to minimize the impact of the *Exercises'* second half, it assumes that what is most decisive—the establishment of a "rapport" (*compenetración*) between God and the soul and the soul's very "transformation" (*transformación*)—has already taken place.

The third and fourth weeks are devoted to Christ's Passion and Resurrection; they are the most faithful to the Gospel narrative as it was then channeled and made available to popular devotion by works like Ludolph's *Vita*. Given that it is in them that Christ's redemptive sojourn comes to the fore, it is surprising to see even discussions of *Exercises'* Christology devoting but a few pages to them. Hugo Rahner's famous study is a good example in this regard. Rahner recognizes that "Christ's work of salvation is now being brought vividly into the mind and heart of the exercitant under the aspect of the passion," but he ends up agreeing with the widespread opinion that the third week is "entirely at the service of the *ordinatio vitae*" brought about by the Election.<sup>2</sup> Of the fourth week, in turn, he writes that it "need only be touched on" since the exercises contained in it are, like those of the third week, "a means of confirming the Election."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Iparraguirre's introduction to his edition of the *Exercises* in the *Obras completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, 122–3.

<sup>2</sup> Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian*, 131.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 133. The third week revolves around the crucifixion, itself the crux of the Gospel narrative, which the *Exercises* assimilate: "The cross of the incarnate creator and Lord of

The strong reliance not simply on the Gospel narrative, but on this narrative as it was then disseminated by popular works of devotion like Ludolph's *Vita*, might give one the impression that the third and fourth weeks are devoid of originality and that this justifies their abridged discussion. One has only to take a closer look at the text, however, to see that these sections contain a series of insights that, aside from being original in their own right, might clarify the specific sense in which the *Exercises*' second half might be said to be a means of "confirming" the Election. This confirmation has been traditionally understood to concern the impact that what is felt in the course of those meditations on Christ's redemptive work has on one's relation to the choice one has made. Is one's resolve strengthened in the course of those meditations? If it is, then one can assume that one made the right choice.

Would it be possible to speak of a "confirmation" in other terms? As I argued in the previous chapter, the consolation without preceding cause is tantamount to the image's disappearance. The Election, in treating this occurrence as its ultimate criterion, could be said to underscore the need for this disappearance, to establish it as the image's fate. If the second half of the *Exercises* "confirms" the Election, it is by holding up an image of this fate: the meditations devoted to Christ's Passion and Resurrection, as I hope to show in what follows, refer to an eschatological interlude that allegorizes the image's trajectory, from its awakening to its disappearance, precisely what is ciphered in Christ's disappearance from the world in the Ascension.

The image's disappearance, announced by the consolation without preceding cause and allegorized in the second half of the *Exercises*, resonates with an obvious but crucial fact. The reign of the image, so to speak, has a limited duration, since at some point the *Exercises* are bound to come to an end. What interests me in this context is the threshold that signals this end, and what this threshold tells us about what preceded it. This threshold is to be found in the famous *Contemplatio ad amorem*. In what follows, I argue that the reign of the image cannot help but be associated with a condition of inoperativity. The whole point of the *Exercises* is to

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all things," Rahner writes, "stands in the very center of the history of salvation, as well as of the spiritual life of the exercitant." Rahner then writes that the third week "is again not merely a loosely-strung set of devout meditations on the life of Christ" but is rather "totally subordinated to the Election" (130–1). The decision made then concerns, too, the spiritual life of the exercitant. Because the suffering Christ is also the crux of the spirituality that emphasizes imitation, it would seem that it is a question of assessing the conformity of one's choice to the model in front of one (132).

allow the exercitant to gradually emerge out of this condition so as to be assimilated into its opposite, the condition of operativity epitomized in the vision of God *ad modum laborantis*. The *Contemplatio ad amorem*, where this vision is articulated, aims to facilitate this assimilation. It is there that the *Exercises* present us with a unique discourse about God, with their distinctive theology. It is there, also, that the conception of the exercitant in instrumental terms first insinuates itself.

The third week begins with a meditation on Christ's journey from Bethany to Jerusalem and on the Last Supper, the first in a series of exercises devoted to the Passion and marked by a progressive emphasis on the motifs of exhaustion, humiliation, and enfeeblement. This emphasis is consistent with the Pauline doctrine of *kenosis*—or *exinanitio*, as the word is rendered in Latin—which concerns the way in which the divine Word “empties” itself (*ex*, “out” + *inanire*, “empty”) of its divine attributes as it unites with the human nature it assumes. Central to the earliest reflections on the Incarnation and on Christ's redemptive sacrifice, the doctrine takes center stage in Saint Paul's Letter to the Philippians. Its importance to the *Exercises'* understanding of the Incarnation is beyond dispute—Hugo Rahner finds a telling indication of it in the way in which the *Vulgata* renders the fragment that, in the second week, asks one to consider “how it came about that the Creator made himself man [*cómo de Criador es venido a hacerse hombre*]”: *exinanivit adeo se ut homo fieret*.<sup>4</sup> Only in the third week, however, does the doctrine truly take center stage. This should come as no surprise, as it is in the Passion, an interlude of extreme suffering for the flesh, that the Word's evacuation of its own divine attributes is at its most apparent. Saint Paul's address to the Philippians is explicit about this point, linking the divinity's humiliation to Christ's decision, while capable of overturning his fate, to remain “obedient unto death”:

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature a God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as a man,

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<sup>4</sup> Exx., 53. On this point, see Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian*, 133.

he humbled himself  
and became obedient unto death—  
even death on a cross!<sup>5</sup>

The divinity's annihilation climaxes in the destruction of the very humanity it takes on as it decides to make itself nothing. By turning the "broken" Christ into the focus of the third week, the *Exercises* come to echo this fundamental insight.<sup>6</sup> The divinity's humiliation, such as it appears in the Pauline hymn, is then further elaborated in the fifth point of the first contemplation for the first day. Confronted with the main episodes of the Passion, the exercitant must consider "how the divinity hides, that is to say, how even though it can destroy its enemies it does not do so, and how it instead allows the most sacred humanity to suffer most cruelly."<sup>7</sup> The renunciation of an omnipotence that inheres in the divine Word finds its correlate in a superlativization of the torment undergone by the human flesh. As the flesh comes to the fore in this way, the divinity recedes—the *Exercises* speak, in this context, of a hiding. This concealment continues until death, a trance that the human nature cannot avoid undergoing if it is, indeed, to be fully human. The third week ends with this death (the moment of most intense concealment) and with the "loneliness," "grief," and "exhaustion" that accompany it.<sup>8</sup>

This pathos is not meant to last very long. We see it giving way to joy with the passage to the fourth week, the first exercise of which is devoted to the Resurrection. This change reflects an important shift in the divinity's concealment: the exercitant, we read, must consider how the divinity, "which seemed to go into hiding in the Passion, now appears and reveals itself so miraculously in the most holy Resurrection."<sup>9</sup> The hiding that brought the third week to a close is mentioned once more, this time in order to bring into relief the divinity's glorious disclosure. Crucially, its mention is accompanied by a subtle but decisive qualification: we read that prior to "appearing and showing itself" (*paresce y se muestra*) the divinity did not actually hide and that it only "appeared to hide" (*parescía esconderse*). We have here an important distinction between two meanings

<sup>5</sup> Phil 2:4–8.

<sup>6</sup> *Exx.*, 203.

<sup>7</sup> "cómo la Divinidad se esconde, es a saber, cómo podría destruir a sus enemigos, y no lo hace, y cómo deja padecer la sacratíssima humanidad tan crudelíssimamente." *Exx.*, 196.

<sup>8</sup> *Exx.*, 208.

<sup>9</sup> *Exx.*, 223.

of the verb *parescer*: becoming visible, on the one hand, and merely seeming, on the other. In appearing and showing itself, what appeared to hide makes it clear, precisely, that it only seemed to hide. The prior certainty surrounding its concealment thus gives way to the recognition that this concealment was an illusion.

This double sense of *parescer* echoes a basic point of phenomenology. The whole second half of the *Exercises* would emerge in fact as the place where a preoccupation with phenomenality insinuates itself. The nucleus of this preoccupation is found in the appearance of what shows itself: the disclosure that signals the passage from the third to the fourth week presents us with an exemplary instance of that coming-into-sight that is at once an emergence-in-being, both of which are characteristic of the concept of the phenomenon. From this perspective, it is legitimate to argue that the revelation of glory as it appears in the *Exercises* presents us with a paradigmatic case of the phenomenon. What is striking in this case is the relationship of equivalence implicitly established between the ‘light’ in which phenomenality finds its condition of possibility and the ‘splendor’ associated with the glory that is here “miraculously” revealed: the phenomenon that typifies the preoccupation with phenomenality as it insinuates itself in the second half of the *Exercises* (the Resurrection) implies an eschatological opening.

In a way, the revelation of glory would seem simply to make explicit (to thematize, if we remain with the vocabulary of phenomenology) a preoccupation with which the exercitant has already come into contact through the use of his imagination. It is after all in and through the image that things appear in the universe of the *Exercises*, and it is likely that each instance of the exercise of this faculty brings this appearance into awareness.<sup>10</sup> More to the point, the revelation of glory can also be said to furnish an allegory for that appearance that is mediated by the image or, to put it differently, for the awakening of things into their own image. The question, then, is whether the fact that this awakening coincides with an eschatological opening means that it is subject to a delimitation comparable to the one that applies to that opening. Indeed, in keeping with the Gospel narrative, the eschatological opening traced in the *Exercises* comes to a close with the Ascension, the moment in which what discloses itself

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<sup>10</sup> As a look at the text suggests, the revelation of glory is the first of a long series of similar appearances: the eschatological opening it inaugurates might be regarded in this sense as a kind of *mise-en-abîme* of the *Exercises*, with the series mirroring the methodic concatenation of images.

in this world (Christ in the fullness of his divine glory) disappears into the otherworldliness that his splendor announced. With this disappearance, the entire fourth week comes to a close, and not without consequences for the allegory being discussed here. For if it is true that the divinity's appearance is an allegory of a thing's awakening into its own image—if it is true that the imagination is eschatologically conceived—then the divinity's eventual disappearance can only imply that such an image is itself expected to disappear.

There is, as we know, one occurrence that the *Exercises* consider to be commensurate with the disappearance of the image, and that is the consolation without preceding cause. The relation between this occurrence and the Ascension is not hard to discern. It suffices to remember in this context that the revelation of glory marks a transition out of a hiddenness that was in itself a moment of extreme desolation, a fact that can only underscore the relation between the revelation of glory—and the awakening of things into their own image it allegorizes—and the occurrence of a consolation. The awakening of things into their own images reveals itself, in this sense, to be fated to culminate in the image's very dissipation. What appears is fated to vanish, just as the images are fated to vanish in the consolation without preceding cause. Once the *Exercises'* preoccupation with the appearance of things is taken into account, it becomes clear that the third and fourth weeks present us with a narrative that mirrors the Election as described above. The relation between the second half of the program and the Election is one of 'confirmation,' but this means more than a 'corroboration' of the correctness of a decision. The very structure of the decision, too, is confirmed. Between the revelation of glory and Christ's eventual disappearance, on the one hand, and the awakening of things into their own image and the dissipation to which the image is fated in the divine consolation, on the other, there is a specular relation that validates the decision by rendering it commensurate with, and by confirming its conformity with, the dynamics of salvation history itself.

There is reason to doubt, however, that this allegory should be understood by reference to the Election only. Even if the Election constitutes the point of convergence for every single element of the *Exercises*, the question of the image concerns the *Exercises* as a whole, precisely because of the program's reliance on the imagination. The significance of the image's disappearance (as that which is allegorized by the Ascension) thus goes beyond its capacity to mirror the advent of the divine consolation in the context of the Election; the image's disappearance also evokes that

moment in which the *Exercises*—and, along with them, the reign of the image—are brought to a close. The disappearance of the image, as that to which the image is fated from the moment of its eschatological awakening, stages the need for its own transcendence and for the *Exercises* to end. One must step outside of the image's dominion, outside of that space that the imagination can colonize in accordance with its “imperialist” ambitions.

Though I speak of the need to transcend the image, I am aware of the fact that the *Exercises* are not meant to be performed only once. Quite to the contrary, it was widely encouraged that they be repeated at regular intervals, and whenever a matter touching on the direction of one's life needed to be decided upon. This is not enough reason to argue, however, that the image is not transcended. Precisely what makes it possible to return to the space they delimit is that at one point one steps beyond it. The need to transcend the image is thus more of a structural feature, built into the *Exercises* and reiterated with every performance. This makes it all the more necessary to determine its significance, by no means an easy task. One can focus on the limit that is at stake in it, and argue that it has a specific institutional import. Thus, in the section they devote to the Ascension, the *Exercises* record the angels' words to the apostles: “Men of Galilee, what are you looking at up in heaven?”<sup>11</sup> The question is intended to assure the apostles of Christ's return, but it also urges them to turn their attention to the world, which is where they find themselves, presumably in order to start disseminating the news of this return. What comes into being through this question is, in this sense, nothing other than the Church, regarded in its ministerial function. The imperative to transcend the domain of the image can be linked, then, to a ministerial commitment, and it might be that such a commitment is also at stake in the *Exercises'* end. For the moment, however, I would like to focus on a different way of conceiving of the significance of this limit. To do this, it is necessary to pay close attention to what the need to transcend the image implies about the image itself. With what is the image associated so that its transcendence seems not simply necessary, but necessary according to the kind of necessity implied by fate?

Immediately upon raising this question, one is reminded of the age-old suspicion with which images have been greeted, a suspicion that can

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<sup>11</sup> *Exx.*, 312.

often erupt in the form of the most implacable iconoclasm. This suspicion originates in the perception that an image is a likeness that, as such, is possessed of an inferior ontological status, and in the fact that in spite of this inferiority this likeness lends itself to being confused with the original of which it gives us a resemblance. The outcry against idolatry is fundamentally a complaint against this confusion and an attempt to call attention to the inferiority of the image. This negative assessment is of course exacerbated by the conception of the imagination as the faculty that is most open to demonic interference, a conception that is of particular relevance to the development of the kind of devotion that the *Exercises* exemplify.<sup>12</sup> The imperative to transcend the image as it insinuates itself in the *Exercises*, however, has nothing to do with this negative valorization of images more generally and of the human imagination more specifically. At stake in it is another dimension of the image, a dimension that is the subject of a long tradition of philosophical speculation first disclosed in Aristotle's *De anima*.

The place to start would be the opening chapter of the second book of this influential treatise, where Aristotle sets out to explain in what sense one might say that the soul is the “essential whatness” of an organized body. Aristotle writes that the soul, as that which animates the body, is united with it in a special way: the relation between the two corresponds to the relation that, in every substance, obtains between a ‘form’ (*morphe*) and the ‘matter’ (*hyle*) that is activated by that form. Form, in this view, is the “actuality” of matter, and their unity is the most fundamental “unity.”<sup>13</sup>

How one might think about the relation between a soul and a body in these terms is clarified immediately after by analogy with a tool: “Suppose,” Aristotle writes, “that a tool, such as an axe, were a physical body; its ‘essential whatness’ would be its essence, and so its soul.”<sup>14</sup> As is the case with other physical bodies, Aristotle goes on to argue, if the animating principle were absent, the axe “would have ceased to be an axe, except in name.”<sup>15</sup> Of course, “what is literally an organ” has no such animating principle—the axe’s being more than an inanimate thing, more than an

<sup>12</sup> On this point, see David Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), 9–38; 161–203.

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *De anima*, 412b9. English version in *On the Soul*, trans. J. A. Smith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 412b12–14.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

organ in the literal sense or a simple “tool,” is here only a supposition. This is not to say, though, that the axe lacks “an essential whatness.” Still, it is not of the same nature as the soul, the “essential whatness” not of the sort of ‘body’ that the axe is, but of that kind of body that has “in itself the power of setting itself in movement and arresting itself.”<sup>16</sup>

An instrument like the axe, a so-called “literal” organ, is an inanimate being. If it is what it is unequivocally, it is because it does not lack a soul, at least not in the sense of being without something that belongs to it by definition. Only what becomes estranged, as it were, from a soul that constitutes its “essential whatness” can enter an “equivocal” existence. This is not so say, though, that instruments are, as such, removed from the possibility of equivocality. Instruments, after all, can be both literal and figurative—to speak of “what is literally an organ” is to imply this. Aside from instruments like the axe, Aristotle notes, there are those organs that serve as the body’s “tools.” These figurative organs, unlike their literal counterparts, are animate. Thus, like the axe that we are asked to take for a physical body, the eye of an animal, Aristotle writes, could also be supposed to have a soul. This soul, he continues, would be found in sight, the “form” of an eye which, seen by itself, would be no more than the “matter” of seeing.<sup>17</sup>

Two points are worth underscoring in relation to this last claim. First, when it comes to an instrument, its ‘form’ is to be essentially linked to its function.<sup>18</sup> It is with a view to this function that the matter is activated in the particular way that distinguishes the being in question. The second point concerns the relation that, according to Aristotle, obtains between organs like the eye and the body of which they are part: “What the departmental sense is to the bodily part which is its organ,” Aristotle writes, “the whole faculty of sense is to the whole sensitive body as such.”<sup>19</sup> It is in light of this relation, essentially a synecdoche, that one can assume that, like the whole sensitive body, these parts have “in themselves” that power of setting themselves in motion and of arresting themselves. Their “essential whatness” is different from that of tools like the axe, and so it is no surprise that in the absence of it they *do* enter an equivocal existence.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 412b15–17.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 412b20–21.

<sup>18</sup> On this point, see S. Marc Cohen, “Hylomorphism and Functionalism,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De anima*, eds. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 57–74.

<sup>19</sup> *De anima*, 412b23–24.

Precisely because of this, in the case of the eye, as soon as sight disappears, “the eye is no longer an eye, except in name—it is no more a real eye than the eye of a statue or of a painted figure.”<sup>20</sup>

Contemplated as a possibility and then discarded when the discussion centered on a “literal” instrument, the instrument’s “equivocal” existence, its existence “in name only,” is affirmed in the case of a ‘figurative’ instrument like the eye. Crucially, in order to illustrate what this “equivocal” existence implies, Aristotle gives two examples from the realm of art. The allusion to statues and paintings hints at an important complicity between the field of the image and the loss of a soul. We might say of this loss that it is the condition for a special visibility—the visibility of what awakens into its own image. Conversely, this visibility in turn serves as an index of this loss. Where the soul vanishes, there is an image; by the same token, where there is an image, a soul can be said to have been lost.

The complicity between the image and the loss of a soul is worth investigating further in light of the relation that Aristotle establishes between the instrument’s ‘form’ and the ‘function’ that it is meant to serve—it is in this sense that one can speak of sight, as Aristotle himself does, as the ‘form’ of an eye. On the basis of this relation, we can say that while the image is an equivocal entity—and worthy, in that sense, of being regarded with suspicion—this equivocality is in the end commensurate with the absence of that functionality that is constitutive of the instrument. The image, in other words, would seem to imply an opening onto a condition of inoperativity.<sup>21</sup> We would do well, in short, not to ignore what is specific about Aristotle’s examples, the fact that he speaks of instruments, of things endowed with a function, and of which it is expected that they will be operative. Indeed, in speaking of instruments Aristotle is able to reveal a dimension of the image that might otherwise go unremarked: its essential relation to the suspension of a praxis.<sup>22</sup>

Does this mean that the image is also essentially related to a theoretical interlude, ruled out for as long as the instrument fulfilled its function? Aristotle’s discussion would seem here to anticipate Heidegger’s influen-

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 412b20–21.

<sup>21</sup> If not also (and here it suffices to invert the synecdoche proposed by Aristotle) onto death itself: for just as the eye of a statue or a painting is an eye “in name only,” so should the being of which such an eye is part be what it is “equivocally.”

<sup>22</sup> Aristotle’s discussion would seem to furnish a basis for the pervasive and influential conception of art (understood here as the production of images) as being tainted by a relation to indolence, and ultimately for the suspicion with which art can be regarded on account of this relation.

tial analysis of instruments in *Being and Time*, where instruments are said to be examples of a kind of thing that is encountered as what it is in the context not of a theoretical inquiry into its properties, but of its purposeful deployment in a praxis. In Heidegger's own terms, staring at the useful thing as a being objectively present, the attributes of which might be apprehended as they are in themselves by a consciousness that remains fundamentally removed from it, cannot get to its readiness-at-hand, "the useful thing's kind of being in which it reveals itself by itself."<sup>23</sup> While this readiness-at-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) differs from the presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) that makes theoretical reflection possible, there is a "way of seeing which guides our operations."<sup>24</sup> This way of seeing is called "circumspection" (*Umsicht*) and it is characterized by the fact that the quality of 'handiness' is never thematized by it: "What is peculiar to what is initially at hand is that it withdraws, so to speak, in its character of handiness in order to be really handy."<sup>25</sup> Useful things are inconspicuous; the ready-at-hand likes "to keep to itself."<sup>26</sup> As Heidegger writes elsewhere, useful things tend to "disappear" into their use.<sup>27</sup>

The instrument's efficacy thus needs to be put under suspension for this handiness to be thematically grasped. Heidegger considers various forms that this suspension can take. Unsuitability, obtrusiveness, and obstinacy are three of them. So is damage, a word designating the harm that can impair the usefulness of an instrument.<sup>28</sup> What characterizes these various modalities of inoperativity, and damage in particular, is that the handiness of instruments becomes conspicuous in them. This conspicuousness, as Heidegger defines it, "presents the thing at hand in a certain unhandiness," and this means that "what is unusable just lies there," in other words, "it shows itself as a thing of use which has this or that appearance and which is always also objectively present with this or that outward appearance in its handiness."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 65.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 71. It is only by reference to this reticence, Heidegger suggests, that it makes sense to speak of a "thing in itself."

<sup>27</sup> Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 158–63.

<sup>28</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 68–9.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 68. Damage opens onto an instance of something *like* pure objective presence, meaning that this presence is not *entirely* detached from handiness, hence Heidegger's mention, in the passage quoted above, of the thing's having "this or that outward appearance *in its handiness*." For even a damaged thing, no longer useful for anything, is not a

As I indicated above, the imperative to transcend the image that the *Exercises* articulate does not originate in a conception of images as idolatrous and of the human imagination as subject to demonic interference. It concerns, instead, that dimension of the image that is associated with a condition of inoperativity and, even more specifically, with damage. The imperative to transcend the image is ultimately an imperative to transcend this condition. To be guided through the *Exercises*, all the way down to the end, is to traverse and eventually to overcome an interlude of damage.

This link between the image and a condition of inoperativity is not meant to be circumscribed to the imagination's objects, the things that become visible through their images. The imagination's subject, the individual who serves as the locus of the imaginative activity, is also implicated in it. It is as if the imaginary effervescence on which the *Exercises* rest ended up determining their every aspect. Indeed, the whole experience can be seen in terms of that inoperativity with which the image is associated. One is asked to retreat from the world, to interrupt one's absorption in the tasks that determine one's life. One's operations are, as it were, adjourned. Of course, this peculiar indolence, as it were, exists with a view to a return to that from which one subtracted oneself: things awaken into their own image for the purposes of the use that is to be made of one of them. Until that use can actually take place, however, what we have is a suspension of operativity, with the subject himself held in abeyance. Thus we return to the problem of the image's disappearance and to the possibility of interpreting this disappearance—given the image's status as the program's basic unit—as an indication that the *Exercises* must come to an end and that one must transcend their confines. If the imperative to transcend the image reflects the fact that the *Exercises* stand for a suspension of operativity, the imperative itself would stand for the overcoming of this suspension. It would be aimed, in other words, at setting a praxis in motion.

A panoramic look at the *Exercises* serves to clarify this. The text's methodic division of its material, all the way down to the level of its *punctos*, can often encourage one to focus on isolated aspects. It is also

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mere thing, but a formerly handy useful thing, something that, unless it can be repaired, one would like to throw away: thus, when the no longer useful thing is disposed of, this being disposed of is just another form of its being at our disposal, and hence at hand. The handiness of the thing, Heidegger concludes, "does not just disappear, but bids farewell, so to speak, in the conspicuousness of what is unusable" (69).

possible, however, to approach the program by reference to the two polarities within which it unfolds.

The first of these polarities would be found in damnation, the subject of the exercises prescribed for the first week. In connection with this, one would do well to call attention to the second preamble for the Meditation on the Three Sins, which asks the exercitant to specify what he wants and desires, and then to make sure that this request is in accord with the meditation's overarching theme. The *Exercises* specify that, since the meditation's focus is on sin, the request should be for "personal shame and confusion as I see how many have been damned on account of a single mortal sin, and how many times I deserved to be damned forever on account of my numerous sins [*quántos han sido dañados por un solo pecado mortal, y quántas veces yo merescía ser condenado para siempre por mis tantos pecados*]."<sup>30</sup> These words are then echoed in the preamble for the Meditation on Hell, in whose preparatory prayer the exercitant must ask for an "interior sense of the suffering which the damned endure [*interno sentimiento de la pena que padescen los dañados*]."<sup>31</sup>

To modern ears, the word *dañados* (literally, "the damaged") might sound like an odd designation for "the damned." The word, however, can be traced back to the Latin verb *damnare*, which encompasses such meanings as 'to find fault,' 'to reject,' and 'to disapprove,' and which includes, in addition, a special set of legal connotations: *damnare* can also mean 'to sentence,' 'to condemn,' and 'to convict.' It is this more restricted usage that is at work in the *Exercises'* characterization of the one who deserves to be *condenado* for his sins as being potentially among the *dañados*. The Latin noun *damnum* has a more restricted semantic spectrum. It can mean either 'injury' or 'harm.' In his *Tesoro*, Covarrubias defines *daño*, the Spanish translation of *damnum*, as "the detriment inflicted upon one's person, property, honor, and everything that can belong to one [*el menos-cabo que uno recibe en su persona, hacienda, honra, y todo lo que le puede pertenecer*]." From there he proceeds to consider different variations: *dañar* means "to cause damage [*hacer daño*]," while *dañarse* designates "a thing's becoming ravaged, corrupted, or ruined by being damaged [*estragarse, corromperse, y maltratarse una cosa, recibiendo daño*]."<sup>32</sup> The word *dañado*, for its part, refers to "what is thus ravaged [*lo tal estragado*]."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Exx., 48.

<sup>31</sup> Exx., 65.

<sup>32</sup> Covarrubias, *Tesoro*, 634.

Beyond these specifically punitive connotations, originating in the domain of judgment and recoverable through etymological analysis, the word *daño* evokes visions of waste, ruin, and havoc. It also carries with it suggestions of physical and moral corruption, of devastation and decay, in a way that is reminiscent of what Ignatius understands by desolation. The exercises of the first week would seem aimed at an internalization of the experience of ruin evoked by this word—the descent into hell, which brings the entire week to a climactic end, is in fact nothing but a methodical immersion in this ruin. Conrod pointedly emphasizes this immersion in his reading of the *Exercises*.<sup>33</sup> The exercitant, he suggests, is expected to confront visions of physical and moral decay, the assumption being that this encounter will fortify him, in the manner of a spiritual homeopathy, and that the confrontation will lead to the eventual overcoming of this corruption. One must be careful, however, not to overlook the importance of the intermediate step. The descent also aims to make the exercitant aware of his own *inclusion* among the *dañados*; the damage that lies at the heart of damnation is more than a spectacle from which he can feel safely excluded. It is something to be interiorized and, as I argued previously, something to be instantiated in a specific way of imagining.

By conceiving of damnation in terms of damage, one can assert with confidence that judgment does not exhaust what is at stake in the individual's condemnation. The contemplative itinerary has as its point of departure a space associated with a suspension of operativity, a suspension that implicates the individual himself. The progress of this itinerary presents us, in turn, with a gradual estrangement from this suspension, with the determination of a thing's usefulness and the use one is to make of it as perhaps the most decisive step. The equivalence between damnation and damage, then, shows that aside from the use of things, it is the individual's own operativity, the overcoming of his own *daño*, of his own damaged condition, that is at stake in the *Exercises*. This overcoming, the second of the two polarities around which the program is organized, is precisely what the famous Contemplation for Attaining Love (*Contemplatio ad amorem*) is about.

The *Contemplatio ad amorem* places the exercitant in heaven, "before God our Lord, the angels, and the saints who intercede for me."<sup>34</sup> The distance that according to the exercises of the first week separates God from

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<sup>33</sup> Conrod, *Loyola's Greater Narrative*, 1–53.

<sup>34</sup> Exx., 232.

the damned—among whom the exercitant is included—is thus reduced to a minimum, while the distance from damnation is, by the same token, increased to its maximum. Significantly, the praise, reverence, and love of God that salvation demands take center stage in this exercise: as part of the preparatory prayer, we read, the exercitant must ask “for interior knowledge of all the good I have received, so that acknowledging this with gratitude I may be able to love and serve his divine majesty in everything.”<sup>35</sup> The meditation’s first point then makes room for the *Exercises’* most sustained and comprehensive statement on the doctrine of salvation and of the place of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice:

Point 1 The first point is to bring to the memory the benefits received—creation, redemption, and particular gifts—pondering with great affection how much God our Lord has done for me and how much He has given me of what he has, and also how, fittingly, the Lord himself wishes to give himself to me, as far as he is able, according to his divine plan. With this in mind I must reflect and consider within myself what, in all reason and justice, I ought for my part to offer and give to his divine majesty, that is to say, everything I have and possess, and myself as well...<sup>36</sup>

The dispensation of God’s gifts to man, we read, is part of his divine plan, a plan in which the gift Christ makes of himself stands at the center. The meditation’s next point, however, makes it clear that other creatures, too, need to be taken into account:

Point 2 The second point is to see how God dwells in creatures—in the elements, giving being, in the plants, causing growth, in the animals, producing sensation, and in man, granting the gift of understanding—and so how he also dwells in me, giving me being, life, and sensation, and causing me to understand...<sup>37</sup>

From a divine plan for man’s salvation, one that is centered on Christ’s sacrifice, we move to a reflection on the cosmos and on an action that

<sup>35</sup> Exx., 233.

<sup>36</sup> “1º punto. El primer punto es traer a la memoria los beneficios recibidos de creación, redención y dones particulares, ponderando con mucho afecto quanto ha hecho Dios nuestro Señor por mí y quanto me ha dado de lo que tiene y consequenter el mismo Señor desea dárseme en quanto puede según su ordenación divina. Y con esto reflectir, en mí mismo, considerando con mucha razón y justicia lo que yo debo de mi parte ofrecer y dar a la su divina majestad, es a saber, todas mis cosas y a mí mismo con ellas.” Exx., 234.

<sup>37</sup> “El segundo mirar cómo Dios habita en las criaturas, en los elementos dando ser, en las plantas vejetando, en los animales sensando, en los hombres dando entender; y así en mí dándome ser, animando, sensando, y haciéndome entender...” Exx., 235.

encompasses all other creatures *sobre la haz de la tierra*. The result of this reflection is an understanding of God that, among other things, embodies the very opposite of the damage that the program underscores at the outset:

Point 3 The third point is to consider how God works and labors on my behalf in all created things on the face of the earth, i.e., *habet se ad modum laborantis*. Thus in the heavens, elements, plants, fruit, cattle, etc., he gives being, conserves life, grants growth and feeling, etc. Then to reflect within myself.<sup>38</sup>

The vision of God behaving “in the manner of a person at work” (*ad modum laborantis*) through his creative and sustaining action affirms a presence and an efficacy that extend to the whole of reality. The *Contemplatio* is here echoing a point made by Aquinas in a passage that deserves to be numbered among its sources. It concerns the problem of whether it is legitimate to say that God is “in all things [*in omnibus rebus*]”:

God is in all things, not, indeed, as part of their essence, nor as an accident, but as an agent is present to that upon which it works. For an agent must be joined to that wherein it acts immediately and touch it by its power.... Now since God is very being by His own essence, created being must be His proper effect; as to ignite is the proper effect of fire. Now God causes this effect in things not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being; as light is caused in the air by the sun as long as the air remains illuminated. Therefore as long as a thing has being, God must be present to it, according to its mode of being.<sup>39</sup>

The *Contemplatio*, of course, is not the first time in the *Exercises* in which we encounter a reference to creatures. The creatures in which God is said to labor are, precisely, the things *sobre la haz de la tierra* mentioned in the Principle and Foundation—they are the things that, as we saw, have been created so that man may attain the end for which he has been created.

<sup>38</sup> “El tercero considerar cómo Dios trabaja y labora por mí en todas cosas criadas sobre la haz de la tierra, id est, *habet se ad modum laborantis*. Así como en los cielos, elementos, plantas, frutos, ganados, etc., dando ser, conservando, vejetando y sensando, etc. Después reflectir en mí mismo.” Exx., 236.

<sup>39</sup> “Deus est in omnibus rebus, non quidem sicut pars essentiae, vel sicut accidentis, sed sicut agens adest ei in quod agit. Oportet enim omne agens coniungi ei in quod immediate agit, et sua virtute illud contingere.... Cum autem Deus sit ipsum esse per suam essentiam, oportet quod esse creatum sit proprius effectus eius; sicut ignire est proprius effectus ignis. Hunc autem effectum causat Deus in rebus, non solum quando primo esse incipiunt, sed quandiu in esse conservantur; sicut lumen causatur in aere a sole quandiu aer illuminatus manet. Quandiu igitur res habet esse, tandiu oportet quod Deus adsit ei, secundum modum quo esse habet.” ST, I, q. 8, art. 1.

If God labors on one's behalf in these things, it is to the extent that they furnish one with possible means of salvation: God labors on one's behalf in those things that one is to use. It is worth remarking here that the injunction to find God *in omnibus rebus* is more than the motto it is often said to be. It is the expression of a comprehensive philosophy of things, rigorously articulated in the *Exercises*, a philosophy that regards things as the point in which a human use and a divine labor intersect.

Aside from the use man makes of things, there is the use God makes of them, and also potentially of him. Man can be damned or saved, and if to be damned is to be damaged, one's damnation results in one's exclusion from the work of a God who behaves *ad modum laborantis*. The reparative dimension often ascribed to the *Exercises* thus turns out to be quite literal. The fact that at the end of the *Exercises* the exercitant encounters God *ad modum laborantis* means that the whole itinerary effects a passage to operativity. This passage presupposes the opposite condition, and the commitment to the image only reflects this presupposition. To be sure, not until the exercitant is asked to confront a God who behaves *ad modum laborantis* is the damage associated with this condition definitively overcome. The apotheosis of efficacy, however, serves to announce the imminent end of the program, along with the cessation of the imaginary activity. Up until this point, a basic relation between inoperativity and the image remains in effect.

The very reference to the damned as the *dañados* would seem to suggest that perhaps man is more than the one on whose behalf God labors, that God labors not only *for oneself* but also potentially *through oneself*. It suggests, in other words, that one can be an instrument if that damage is overcome. For God to labor through oneself, however, man would have to encounter his fellow men. For if God labors through oneself, it is certainly for others like oneself. What we have here is an opening towards the *próximo*, a category that will prove central to the community for which the *Exercises* would provide the foundation, and an intimation of its two-fold concern with one's salvation and with the salvation of others. I spoke, above, about the encounter between a human use and a divine labor. We can say that the use of things, the central preoccupation of the *Exercises*, concerns one's salvation, and that God's labor concerns, ultimately, one's role in the salvation of others. From this perspective, the twofold concern with one's salvation and with the salvation of others can only mean that one's salvation is not sufficient in itself, that on a certain level the reparative procedure is not completed until one is assimilated into God's labor, as something through which God might labor for others just as he

labors on behalf of oneself. The reparative procedure undertaken by the *Exercises*, in short, is only consummated with one's transformation into a means and, more to the point, into an instrument for the salvation of others. This should alert us to the paradigmatic case in which the use of things automatically assimilates one into the labor outlined in the *Contemplatio*: when the decision at stake in the *Exercises* concerns one's admission into the Society of Jesus, the community that views the salvation of others as a concern that is as crucial as one's own salvation.<sup>40</sup> I now turn, in the chapters that follow, to this concern, and to the individual's emergence as an instrument.

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<sup>40</sup> We are here in the realm of what Suárez called the *Exercises*' "passive use" (*usus passivus*), which concerns Jesuits seeking either to discern or consolidate their vocation. Suárez distinguished this passive use from the *Exercises*' "active use" (*usus activus*), which he considered to be oriented towards those outside the Society. A more detailed discussion of this distinction, whose importance I already anticipated in my introductory remarks, can be found below.

## PART TWO

THE PRAXIS OF PROVIDENCE:  
THE *CONSTITUTIONS* OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS  
AND THE THEOLOGY OF THE INSTRUMENT



## CHAPTER FIVE

### PROVIDENCE

Augustine opens the final book of the *City of God* with a reflection on a paradox. We are told, Augustine writes, that in the wake of his expulsion from paradise man became implicated in “the necessity of dying.” Why, then, did God not withdraw from man that “fecundity originally bestowed” when, before the fall, he instructed him to propagate and multiply? Because he did not take away man’s so-called “power of seed,” we can be sure that although individual men die, the human race lives on.<sup>1</sup>

That God’s punishment stopped short of humanity’s extinction shows, according to Augustine, that man remains, despite his own ineluctable entanglement in sin, within the sphere of God’s benevolence.<sup>2</sup> Two ‘blessings’ (*benedictiones*) that, from their source in God’s goodness, flow towards man’s nature make this apparent. The first one is ‘propagation’ (*propagatio*), a word that designates that congenital “power of seed” that man’s nature was bestowed upon creation and that it was not deprived of after being implicated in death.<sup>3</sup> The other one is found in what Augustine calls ‘conformation’ (*conformatio*), a word that refers to the “effacious power” that ensures that powers like propagation are actualized as they should be and that men “continue in possession of that nature they were created in.”<sup>4</sup>

The two blessings, Augustine suggests, correspond to two different dimensions of God’s relation to his creatures. Propagation, a congenital capacity, was conferred upon man’s nature on the occasion of creation, in other words, “when God made those first works, from which he rested on

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 2.24. English version in *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> “For in condemning it,” we read, “He did not withdraw all that He had given it, or else it would have been annihilated; neither did He, in penalty subjecting it to the devil, remove it beyond His own power; for not even the devil himself is outside of God’s government, since the devil’s nature subsists only by the supreme Creator who gives being to all that in any form exists.” *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> “God,” Augustine writes, “so created man that He gave him what we may call fertility, whereby he might propagate other men, giving them a congenital capacity to propagate their kind.” *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

the seventh day.” The power of conformation, in turn, “is conferred in that work of His wherein ‘He worketh hitherto.’” God’s relation to his creatures is thus twofold, and finds expression in two different works. The first one, which brings natures into existence along with the congenital capacities that characterize them, refers to that inaugural moment in which the world came into being. The second work, which ensures that individual things remain in being and that their capacities develop accordingly, extends, by contrast, up until the present moment. Augustine’s distinction between the two works is crucial, since it implies that beyond the “lordship” over creation established as a result of the first work—by virtue of the bestowal of being upon those natures in which individual things share—God is also the subject of a continuous action upon creation, an action whose purpose is not only to preserve things but to lead them towards their appointed ends or to “govern” them.<sup>5</sup> This work presents a powerful challenge to any form of deism, to the notion of a God whose work ends when creation is complete. It introduces, instead, a theistic alternative, allowing one to speak of a *deus actuosus* who preserves and guides things and who, through this government, maintains a providential investment in creation.<sup>6</sup>

Augustine’s discussion of that work of God’s “wherein He worketh hitherto” evokes Aquinas’ concepts of ‘conservation’ (*conservatio*) and ‘concurrence’ (*concurrētia*). ‘Conservation’ is in fact synonymous with that preservation of a thing’s being that Augustine brings under the power of conformation. The concept first appears in the *Summa contra gentiles*, where Aquinas explores the implications of the claim that God is the agent for whom creation is the most proper action. If to be a creature is to depend on this God, he writes, creatures would cease to exist should

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<sup>5</sup> The word ‘dominion’ might be a more faithful translation of the Latin word *imperium*, which is the word that Augustine uses in reference to the relation between God and creation, yet ‘government’ is ultimately more accurate, since it conveys something in excess of an ascendancy: the praxis that, grounded in that ascendancy, is also what expresses it.

<sup>6</sup> As George Ovitt writes, Augustine’s work often presents an image of God as “the tranquil and sustaining center of the universe,” and it was this image that “dominated medieval descriptions of the creator’s role once the act of creation was completed.” See George Ovitt, *The Restoration of Perfection: Labor and Technology in Medieval Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 63. Ovitt is right. Augustine’s discussion of the work “wherein ‘He worketh hitherto’” in the *City of God* seems not to have sufficed to prevent some of his followers from pursuing the deistic possibilities contained in this image—Ovitt mentions, in this connection, Eurigena’s *Periphyseon*.

this dependence come to an end.<sup>7</sup> God's conservation of creatures is a necessity that the created order thrusts to the fore in its very definition.<sup>8</sup> 'Concurrence,' for its part, refers to something like the fulfillment of a thing's nature that Augustine also brings under 'conformation.' The concept develops from Aquinas' distinct understanding of creation in terms of conservation.<sup>9</sup> A thing, he writes, can only give being to another thing if it is in being, and because it is in being owing to God's conservation, in the end "it is as a result of divine power that a thing gives being."<sup>10</sup> Now, the actualization of what Augustine calls the power of propagation is in fact only one example of a general rule that states that God is "the cause of operation of all things that operate."<sup>11</sup> Like the operation by which a creature gives being to another creature, every other operation can be said to depend, for its efficacy, on God. This dependence is expressed most decisively in those operations that are like the 'effects' of the 'cause' that God is:

It is obvious that every action which cannot continue after the influence of a certain agent has ceased results from that agent. For instance, the manifestation of colors could not continue if the sun's action of illuminating the air were to cease, so there is no doubt that the sun is the cause of the manifestation of colors. And the same thing appears in connection with violent motion, for it stops with the cessation of violence on the part of the impelling agent. But just as God has not only given being to things when they first began to exist but also causes being in them as long as they exist, conserving things in being as we have shown, so also has He not merely granted operative powers to them when they were originally created, but He always causes these powers in things. Hence, if this divine influence were to cease,

<sup>7</sup> Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, II.25. English version in *Summa contra Gentiles*, ed. Joseph Kenny (New York: Hanover House, 1957). For a summary of Aquinas' views on creation, see Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. G. A. Elrington, trans. Edward Bullough (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1993), 132–166.

<sup>8</sup> *Summa contra Gentiles*, III.65.

<sup>9</sup> In an important development of Augustine's doctrine, however, Aquinas suggests that it might be possible to view conservation as a continuous creation and creation itself as a figurative way of speaking about the relationship of dependence between a creator and his creatures that is at stake in conservation. Aquinas finds it pertinent to consider this possibility because it allows him to speak about creation in a manner that avoids the intractable difficulties associated with the beginning postulated by the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Cf. Willian Lane Craig, "Creation and Conservation Once More," *Religious Studies* 34, no. 2 (1998): 177–188.

<sup>10</sup> *Summa contra Gentiles*, III.66.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, III.67.

every operation would cease. Therefore, every operation of a thing is traced back to Him as to its cause.<sup>12</sup>

Aristotle wrote that “since not everything is or comes to be of necessity and always, but most things happen usually, the accidental must exist.”<sup>13</sup> The existence of the accidental was thought to provide a basis for a refutation of determinism, a fact that explains why theologians could not ground a concept of providence on the writings of Aristotle.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it is Aristotle and his followers that Aquinas has in mind when he writes, disapprovingly, of those “ancient philosophers of nature” who teach that “all things happen by chance.” By contrast, once every operation is attributed to God *sicut primo et principali agenti*, chance becomes an impossibility. Aquinas did not wish to completely deny contingency, and recognized that there are cases in which it is the operations of things that act as causes. But to the extent that God is the cause of operation of all things that operate, such causes can be shown to “act through his power” and thus impossible to assimilate to the realm of the *per accidens*.<sup>15</sup>

The understanding of the cosmos as an ensemble of operations that unfold *ex aliquo providentiae ordine* assumes that God is not simply the cause of these operations but also their end. At stake here, however, is not an end of the kind that “holds first place in the order of intention” but is “posterior in existing.”<sup>16</sup> God cannot be this kind of end—essentially an effect intended by an agent and then brought about through its operation—if he is the cause of operation of all things that operate. As the principal agent, God is an end of a different sort, one that holds first place in the order of intention and in the order of existence.<sup>17</sup> God, who bestows being upon things, is also the end for the sake of which they exist, not as

<sup>12</sup> “Manifestum est quod omnis actio quae non potest permanere cessante impressione alicuius agentis, est ab illo agente: sicut manifestatio colorum non posset esse cessante actione solis qua aerem illuminat, unde non est dubium quin sol sit causa manifestatio- nis colorum. Et similiter patet de motu violento, qui cessat cessante violentia impellentis. Sicut autem Deus non solum dedit esse rebus cum primo esse incooperunt, sed quandiu sunt, esse in eis causat, res in esse conservans, ut ostensum est; ita non solum cum primo res conditae sunt, eis virtutes operativas dedit, sed semper eas in rebus causat. Unde, ces- sante influentia divina, omnis operatio cessaret. Omnis igitur rei operatio in ipsum redu- citur sicut in causam.” Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 1027a.

<sup>14</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J. Patout Burns (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971), 77.

<sup>15</sup> *Summa contra Gentiles*, III. 67, n. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., III, 18, n. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., III, 18, n. 3.

something they intend to bring about but as something that, already in existence, they must attain. The axiom that holds that every operation must be attributed to God *sicut primo et principali agenti* means, however, that this outcome depends on him—for things to attain their end, they must be led to that end by that end itself. According to Aquinas, God governs things by directing them towards their end or by “using” them:

Whoever makes a thing for the sake of an end may use the thing for that end. Now, we showed above that all things possessing being in any way whatever are God's products, and also that God makes all things for an end which is himself. Therefore, he uses all things by directing them to their end. Now, this is to govern. So, God is the governor of all things through his providence.<sup>18</sup>

One of the implications of the claim that things act through God's power is that everything unfolds *ex aliquo providentiae ordine* and without the intervention of chance. The other implication concerns the status of the things God governs. While their operations can serve as causes, they are no more than “secondary” causes, distinct from the “principal” cause through whose power they operate. “The cause of an action,” Aquinas summarizes, “is the one by whose power the action is done rather than what acts,” or rather, “the principal agent rather than the instrument.”<sup>19</sup> From the perspective of the operations in which the nature of a thing is fulfilled, and in terms of the cosmos as Aquinas conceives of it, things are endowed with an instrumental dimension.<sup>20</sup> Opinions are divided as to whether Aquinas uses the word ‘instrument’ (*instrumentum*) other than in a figurative sense. The consensus is that the word is to be understood as a mark of subordination, of the ‘secondary’ status of what exists in relation to a ‘primary’ cause. At the same time, the reference to things as instruments resonates with the operational emphasis of his theism, and with his

<sup>18</sup> “Quicumque facit aliquid propter finem, utitur illo ad finem. Ostensum autem est supra quod omnia quae habent esse quicunque modo, sunt effectus Dei; et quod Deus omnia facit propter finem qui est ipse. Ipse igitur utitur omnibus dirigendo ea in finem. Hoc autem est gubernare. Est igitur Deus per suam providentiam omnium gubernator.” *Ibid.*, III, 64, n. 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 67, n. 5.

<sup>20</sup> The repeated references to the instrument throughout his work show this characterization to be pervasive and essential to his system. For a detailed catalogue of its appearances, see Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, 81.

eventual characterization of God's providential action as analogous to the work of an artisan who sets out to execute a particular plan.<sup>21</sup>

What is the relation between this conception of God and the God who, according to the *Exercises*, behaves *ad modum laborantis*? In speaking of this God, Ignatius' book would seem to align itself with Aquinas' operational theism. The *Exercises*, too, conceive of God's providential government as analogous to the actions of a person at work. The question is whether in so doing Ignatius' book also aligns itself with Aquinas' understanding of things as instruments. Is it not true that the text states that God labors for one's behalf, in such a way as to imply that things are the 'means' of this labor? Instruments are means, and so it would seem to follow that Ignatius' book, too, conceives of things as instruments. Of course, this assumes a figurative understanding of the word 'instrument,' according to which 'instrument' is a designation for any thing used in the pursuit of an aim. This must be contrasted with its literal counterpart, according to which 'instrument' designates something of the order of a 'tool.' Aquinas, as I mentioned, would seem to appeal, according to some, to a figurative use of the word. At the same time, the operational inflection of his cosmology makes it possible to assume that the instruments he mentions might be more than figures of subordination. Once again, in the case of Aquinas' cosmology, it is the reference to a work that secures the possibility of a literal understanding of the instrument. That a similar reference is in effect in the *Exercises'* allusion to a God who behaves *ad modum laborantis* makes it possible to view the things of which they speak not simply as means, but as instruments in their own right.

The reference to a God who behaves in the manner of a person at work can be said to present us with a personification. The words *ad modum* are crucial in this respect: they alert us to the fact that the phrase marks no less of a figurative turn than the one implied by the decision to speak of things as instruments given their status as means. I myself have pointed out from the start that this study is concerned with a metaphor, so I would be the first one to recognize that we are dealing here with so-called figurative language. Ultimately, though, I am concerned with what things look like

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 83. This work would stand in opposition to a passive knowledge of the course of things, which is how providence could be understood and how it was in fact understood in Stoic circles, in strict adherence to the etymology of the Greek word *pronoia* (*pro-* 'fore' + *noia* 'knowledge'). The opposition presents us with the two dominant approaches to providence. Cf. Pierre-Jean Labarrière, "Providence," *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, vol. 12 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1937–1995), 2465.

from within the space delimited by the metaphor. One has only to remain within the limits of the personification, and view the labor ascribed to God as a defining context of relevance, for all created things *sobre la haz de la tierra* to emerge as literal rather than as figurative instruments—as something in excess, that is, of the notion of ‘means.’

It is interesting to consider this literalization of the figure (made possible, paradoxically, by one’s decision to inhabit the space delimited by the figure) in relation to the reference to man that the *Contemplatio ad amorem* inserts in its discussion of God’s providential relation to creation. The final meditation of the *Exercises* clearly indicates that this relation exceeds God’s care for the things on the face of the earth, since this care is ultimately for the benefit of man. As was anticipated in the Principle and Foundation, which speaks of creatures other than man as having been created for man, the cosmos finds its center in man—the hierarchical arrangement that the *Contemplatio ad amorem* asks one to consider in this connection confirms this fact: elements, plants, and animals are mentioned before man, the implicit consummation of the series. Crucially, this reference to man coincides with a specification of God’s cosmic provision. God’s providential care finds expression in the preservation of things and in the effort to ensure the fulfillment of their nature, but what form does this care take if one takes into account the fact that this care is for man and if it is not only man’s being, growth, sensation, and understanding—to echo the language of the *Contemplatio*—but also his salvation that is at stake? Man, it would seem, requires something more specific than that animating presence that such a provision is initially said to imply. Thus we arrive at those references to how much God “has given me of what he has” and to how “the Lord himself wishes to give himself to me, as far as he is able, according to his divine plan.” When man is taken into account, the general provision at stake in the concept of providence and the question of a government of the world gives way to its more specific formulation in Christ’s sacrifice.

It is my claim here that in the *Exercises* the implications of this more specific formulation of God’s provision—placed as it is at the book’s end—are simply intimated. I argue that they await their development elsewhere, in the texts associated with the Society of Jesus’ institutionalization and, more specifically, in its *Constitutions*. It is, indeed, as a development of the conception of providence that is sketched in the *Exercises* in the manner I just specified that, in the pages that follow, I approach a series of references, scattered throughout the Society’s normative documents, to the individual Jesuit as God’s “instrument.” The metaphor of

the instrument is found, first, in a series of preparatory drafts for the Society's *Constitutions*. Eventually, it makes its way into the definitive text, surfacing at several crucial moments of the *Constitutions'* reflection on the Society's own identity. Ultimately, the metaphor will also travel outside of the Society's normative documents, appearing in other areas of the corpus of the order's foundation. I am thinking here of a number of letters that Ignatius wrote in his capacity as the Society's first general, and which I will consider in detail in the third part of this study. I am interested, in the chapters that follow, in the itinerary that leads to the metaphor's appearance in the *Constitutions*, but I also seek to understand the metaphor, as I just noted, by reference to the reflection on providence that underlies the *Exercises'* reference to God *ad modum laborantis*. What role must one assign to the Jesuit instrument within the providential labor that the instrument evokes, and that determines how this instrument should be understood?

Part One was devoted to a reading of the *Exercises* centered on the problem of use. Together with the concept of providence that is intimated in the admonition to think of God *ad modum laborantis*, a concept according to which God "uses" things as he leads them back to himself, this problem, too, can be said to foreshadow the appearance of the metaphor of the instrument. As I noted in my introductory remarks, I view the metaphor as a thematic expression of a preoccupation with God's providential praxis and with praxis more generally, a preoccupation that permeates the *Exercises* and that will eventually come to characterize the Society as a whole. Part of what I wish to propose, however, is that this thematization does not simply express essential aspects of the Society's nature, but that it also plays a role in the *determination* of this nature. Up until, and in fact even beyond, Ignatius' death, this nature was in no way fixed: as Ignatius himself liked to insist, the Society existed *in fieri*. Probably the most fruitful way of conceiving of the process leading to the promulgation of the *Constitutions* is to regard it as an attempt, on the part of the Society, to understand itself and to articulate the results of that understanding.<sup>22</sup> The metaphor, as a thematization of a fundamental preoccupation, is part

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<sup>22</sup> O'Malley devotes important pages to the "campaign for self-understanding" upon which Ignatius and the rest of the Society's leadership embarked in its early years. In his account, this self-understanding covered "what the Society was about and how it 'proceeded'" and it was meant to inspire Jesuits "to persevere in their commitment." See O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 62–9.

of this process of understanding by which what needed to be understood (the Society's nature) not only gained definition but was itself altered.

My analysis of this complex dynamic begins in the chapters that follow and continues in those of the next part, which is devoted to a series of junctures in Ignatius' government of the Society in which the metaphor of the instrument becomes itself an instrument through which to manage and diffuse a crisis. This discussion of the instrument in the context of the need to respond to contingent circumstances will serve, I hope, to modulate the normative vision of the instrument that is set forth in the *Constitutions*, the central concern of this part of this study. My aim, as I already noted, is not only to trace how the metaphor of the instrument makes its way into the *Constitutions*, but also to determine what the metaphor's relation to the conception of providence that it evokes can tell us about the instrument mentioned by the *Constitutions*. Ultimately, though, I am interested in what this instrument can itself tell us about the Society. Part of what I want to argue here is that there is an important link between the understanding of the individual Jesuit as an instrument of the divinity and some of the Society's most distinctive features as the Society itself would come to understand them. In particular, I am interested in what the Society understood to be its singular mission and in its relation to the world. In line with this, I will show that both the group's commitment to instruction and its enthusiastic affirmation of the world can be understood by reference to the metaphor of the instrument. This will only become apparent, however, after I trace the metaphor's appearance in the Society's normative documents and after I pay close attention to a theological genealogy that views the metaphor of the instrument as the link between the various specifications of God's providential labor, from the kind of cosmic provision discussed in the *Exercises* to the sacramental administration of grace undertaken by the Church and, within the Church, by institutions like the Society.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE JESUIT INSTRUMENT

More often than not, when the Society of Jesus is mentioned in conjunction with discussions of providence, it is in reference to the individual achievements of Jesuit theologians who were active decades after the Society's foundation. Suárez, Lessius, and Caussade are three of the theologians that immediately come to mind in this connection. Of course, no list would be complete without a reference to Luis de Molina, whose *De concordia* (1588) stands by most accounts as the most decisive contribution to the early modern debate on providence.<sup>1</sup>

The originality of Molina's system and the impact of his concept of *scientia media* are beyond dispute. A discussion of providence centered on his work, however, would not simply exceed the chronological limits of this investigation. It would also emphasize what is ultimately a fairly restricted problematization of this concept, at least when compared to the inquiry into providence that, as I have been suggesting, one can find in the *Exercises* and in the Society's *Constitutions*. The kind of inquiry epitomized by Molina's work focuses, indeed, on the epistemological questions posed by God's foreknowledge and on what such foreknowledge implies for human freedom and accountability. These questions converge in a decisive fashion in the problem of predestination, where God's foreknowledge and its implications for human accountability come to bear directly on the question of salvation. We know that they were already the subject of a brewing controversy at the time in which the *Exercises* came into being, and the extent of their doctrinal and institutional impact and their lasting resonance can only confirm the importance of the kind of inquiry into providence with which they are associated.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Luis de Molina, *De concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, diuina praescientia, prouidentia, praedestinatione, et reprobatione* (Lisbon: Antonium Riberium, 1588). Leonard Lessius' two most important works on providence are *De perfectionibus moribusque divinis* (Antwerp: Plantin apud vid. & fil. I. Moreti, 1620) and *De providentia numinis et animi immortalitate* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1613). Caussade's work, composed in first half of the 18th century, is titled *L'abandon à la Divine Providence*, ed. Jacques Gagey (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of the controversy surrounding predestination at the threshold of the modern period, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development*

Not even the extent of this impact, however, can obscure the fact that they are fairly specialized, and not only in terms of the training that their investigation would progressively require or of the technicalities on which the solution to the problems they posed would pivot. They are also specialized to the extent that they presuppose something more broad: the existence of a God who is actively engaged in a praxis of government aimed, as I discussed in the previous chapter, at leading things back to himself. This praxis furnishes us with the core of the concept of providence. At the very least, the departure from classical cosmology that scholars associate with the concept—starting with its first articulation in the Stoic notion of *pronoia*—can be traced to this praxis. Indeed, starting with the Stoic notion the stage is set for a way of thinking about God, as I indicated above, in theistic terms, as a supreme being very much unlike the so-called Prime Mover, who moves things without intending to, and whose absorption in a contemplative trance is never compromised by those motions.<sup>3</sup>

The discussion of God's cosmic provision in the *Exercises* provides us with evidence of a preoccupation with providence attuned to this more basic, yet by no means simple, presupposition. One might go even further, and argue that the *Contemplatio ad amorem* makes it possible to associate the Society of Jesus with a preoccupation with providence that is not typified by the individual achievements of those Jesuits who, like Molina, contributed to the theological debate around this question. Instead, it is possible to speak of a relation between the Society itself and providence, and this to the extent that the laboring God of which the *Exercises* speak anticipates the emergence, in a set of documents bearing witness to the creation of what would come to be known as the Society of Jesus, of the metaphor of the instrument and of an instrumental preoccupation that clearly builds upon the inquiry into God's praxis that first appears in the *Exercises*.

How did the metaphor of the instrument make its way into the *Constitutions*? While in Paris, Ignatius and his first companions took a vow in a

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*of Doctrine, Vol. 4: Reformation of Church and Dogma* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1985), 10–68.

<sup>3</sup> On this departure from classical cosmology, and on the displacement of its *deus otiosus* by a *deus actuosus*, see Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa and Matteo Mandarini (Stanford University Press, 2011), 113.

chapel in Montmartre. With their studies about to come to an end, they set their sights on what awaited them afterwards. Taking their inspiration from Ignatius' pilgrimage to the Holy Land, they resolved to travel to Rome and, after securing the Pope's blessing, to continue onto Jerusalem. They were not sure whether they wanted to remain there, and left open the possibility of returning to Rome.<sup>4</sup>

Ignatius and his companions knew that the trip across the Mediterranean could easily run into difficulties. They decided, accordingly, that should they be prevented from getting to Jerusalem they would leave it to the Pope to decide how they could be most useful. As they had feared, their efforts to secure a passage to the Holy Land proved unsuccessful. Proceeding as they had planned, they requested an audience with the Pope, who asked them to think of Rome as their Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> It was in the spring of 1539 that the group set out to deliberate on the future of their fellowship. The prospect of long periods of separation prompted Ignatius and his followers to formally constitute themselves as a religious order. The results of the deliberation are contained in a document known as the *Formula*, which dates from 1539. The times were not favorable to the creation of new orders, and Ignatius and his followers were not regarded auspiciously by some members of the curia. After a year of arduous wrangling between different factions, however, the *Formula* was approved and its central points incorporated into *Regimini militantis ecclesia*, the papal bull that on 27 September 1540 granted official recognition to the Society of Jesus.

Once the Society had been officially recognized, Ignatius and his companions were required to elect a superior and to start working on a governing document. Ignatius was elected to the post, and it was in this capacity that he embarked on the composition of the Society's *Constitutions*. Ignatius worked alone for the first seven years, closely studying the rules of other orders. Starting in 1547, however, he benefited from the assistance of Juan Alfonso de Polanco. A native of Burgos, Polanco had been on the path to a successful career as a *scriptor apostolicus* in the Roman curia when Diego Laínez guided him through the *Exercises*. After four

<sup>4</sup> The Jesuits' original plans, including divergent opinions about the purpose of their journey to Jerusalem as recounted by Pierre Favre and Diego Laínez, have been discussed by Pierre Blet, "Note sur les origines de l'obéissance ignatienne," *Gregorianum* 25 (1954): 104–5. The most comprehensive discussion of the Jesuits' plans relative to Jerusalem continues to be Pedro de Leturia, "Jerusalén y Roma en los designios de San Ignacio," in *Estudios ignacianos*, vol. 1 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1957), 181–200.

<sup>5</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 35.

years of theology studies in Padua and two years in the Society's house in Florence, he returned to Rome in March of 1547, putting the experience he had amassed in the curia at the service of the reorganization of the Society's secretariat, an office which, until then, had been assigned to different members of Ignatius' intimate circle on an *ad hoc* basis.<sup>6</sup>

The metaphor of the Jesuit as an instrument figures prominently in the two preparatory sketches that Polanco prepared for the *Constitutions*. Titled, respectively, *Doce industrias con que se ha de ayudar la Compañía* and *Industrias con que uno de la Compañía mejor conseguirá sus fines*, they were finished in 1548, less than a year after his arrival in Rome, and are referred to collectively as the *Industrias*. Both precede the preliminary draft of the *Constitutions* written in his own hand and a second draft with Ignatius' corrections, along with the third and definitive draft and its Latin translation, most of which Polanco produced himself.

The metaphor of the instrument is used twice in the first sketch. It appears in the discussion of the fifth *industria*, which specifies how aspiring Jesuits are to make the progress in spiritual matters required of them before they can become professed members. This passage begins by stating that, because the aims of the Society are spiritual in nature, a spiritual disposition is key, more so than learning: "First it is presupposed that learning without spiritual progress is not enough, that it rather hurts this Society, *quia scientia inflat*, and that while both things are necessary, what concerns the spirit is so in a most special way." This is crucial, we read, not only for the Jesuit and the Society, but also for those that the Society intends to help. Because the Society's task consists in "bringing them back from the flesh to the spirit," men who have made progress in spiritual matters are better suited for it: in spiritual matters, we read, God desires that "the one who is going to be his instrument [*quien ha de ser su instrumento*]" possess the very virtues that he intends to instill in others.<sup>7</sup> Later on, in a virtual word-by-word restatement of the same point, it is declared that God, "to make men firm in faith, charity, hope, and all the other virtues, wants his instrument... to be filled with them [*quiere que su instrumento... sea lleno de todas ellas*]."<sup>8</sup> The first section of the second sketch opens with the exact same statement, while later on it is pointed out that both "charity and one's own interior perfection" are what make man an

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ind. I*, 5.1. English translations of the *Industrias* are my own.

<sup>8</sup> *Ind. I*, 9.1.

“ideal instrument of which divine goodness wants to avail itself to bestow upon or increase his grace in others [*idóneo instrumento de quien la bondad divina se quiera servir para dar o aumentar su gracia en otros*].”<sup>9</sup>

The communication of grace aptly sums up the instrument’s purpose. It also resonates with the Society’s sense of its own purpose as it is articulated in the *Industrias*. The Society, the text does not tire of repeating, exists “for the neighbor’s good [*para el bien del próximo*]”.<sup>10</sup> More often than not, however, Polanco uses the metaphor of the instrument in the *Industrias* in order to illustrate the kind of relation that should obtain between God and the Jesuit. About the one who might find himself acting as the superior of others, for example, the text has the following to say:

It is necessary for him to be very united with God and familiar with him in prayer, so that from this conjunction with the author of all the good he might draw out the value and efficacy of the human means that he and those in the Society will use to help the neighbor, and so that his entreaties may procure grace from everyone.<sup>11</sup>

Aside from grace, the divine means that furthers the Society’s own aim of increasing grace in others, the Society also has, as the text indicates, a series of human means at its disposal. These human means, here said to be strengthened by familiarity with God in prayer, are specified in detail in the second sketch. Thus we learn in the fifth *industria* that there are divine and human means and that human means might be internal—these include, aside from the three cardinal virtues, prayer and the desire to help others—or external—here we find the whole range of activities comprised within the group’s pastoral program, such as preaching, lectures, instruction in Christian doctrine, giving the sacraments, and administering the *Exercises*.<sup>12</sup> The priority of the divine means is continuously asserted:

So that these means are efficacious and proportionate to what is being sought, which is to help the neighbor leave behind vices and sins and to procure grace or its increase, and given that this end exceeds what natural capacities can achieve, it is true that we must not place our trust principally

<sup>9</sup> *Ind. II*, 5.3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ind. I*, 1.2.

<sup>11</sup> “Le es necesario ser muy unido con Dios y familiar en la oración, porque de esta *coniunctión* con el autor de todo el bien saque valor y eficacia a los medios humanos que él y los de la Compañía usaren para ayudar al prójimo, e impetra gracia para todos.” *Ind. I*, 11.2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ind. II*, 5.2.

in human means, but in the infinite goodness and power of God, from whom the means used to achieve the effect we seek derive their efficacy, as much as he wishes to employ them for his service. Thus, though we may seek out the aforementioned means with diligence, we must always set our sights on his divine hands, and expect all efficacy to come from them.<sup>13</sup>

Formerly grounded in the union with God sought by prayer, the instrument's efficacy is now traced to the divine hands. These two dimensions can of course be combined. One can argue that prayer seeks nothing, indeed, but to deliver the instrument to those hands and to encourage it to surrender to God's grip. This claim is not without significance for the *Exercises*, which are themselves a method of prayer. Neither of the two *Industrias*, however, says much about the *Exercises'* role in the constitution of an efficacious instrument. That is only explicitly articulated in the *Constitutions*, the document for which Polanco's sketches provide a basis.

Parallel to working on these sketches, Polanco undertook a thorough review of the governing instruments of other religious orders. He came up with a summary of points to be included in the definitive text, and combined this material with what Ignatius had amassed on his own, before his arrival in Rome. Aside from bringing in the wealth of material with which he had become familiar in his time in the curia and in his studies, Polanco is credited with endowing what he and Ignatius had assembled with an organic form.<sup>14</sup> The first full draft, completed in 1548, would be discussed by professed members two years later. Ignatius incorporated his companions' feedback and produced a final version, which was finished in 1551. The text, long by the standards of comparable documents, was divided into ten parts, the first seven of which are ordered according to

<sup>13</sup> “Para que estos medios sean eficaces y proporcionados a lo que se pretende, que es ayudar al prójimo a dejar los vicios y pecados, y conseguir gracia o aumento de ella, siendo este fin sobre las fuerzas naturales, es cierto que no debemos poner en medios humanos la confianza principalmente, sino en la infinita bondad de Dios y potencia suya, de la cual los medios que usamos tienen eficacia para conseguir tal efecto, y tanta quanta él quiere servirse de ellos. Así que, aunque se use diligencia en los medios dichos, siempre habemos de mirar en las manos divinas, esperando de allí toda la eficacia.” Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> See Iparraguirre's introduction to the text of the *Constitutions* in his edition of the *Obras completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, 355. For a detailed overview of the composition of the *Constitutions* see Antonio M. de Aldama, “La composición de las *Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús*,” *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 42 (1973): 201–45. A shorter account of the text's genesis can be found in O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 335–8. According to Iparraguirre, with Polanco's arrival the composition of the *Constitutions* enters a new phase, centered on the “estructuración arquitectónica” of the text (354). The *Industrias* clearly show him, however, to have been responsible also for entire passages.

an ideal of the Jesuit's progression: they cover, accordingly, his admission into the order, his development throughout his probationary period, his studies, his official incorporation, and finally his ministry. O'Malley speaks of this "developmental design" as a mark of the *Constitutions'* originality.<sup>15</sup> Of particular importance, in this regard, is the end that orients this design: the *Constitutions*, O'Malley writes, "presented a clear orientation towards ministry as the purpose of the order and as the context in which the members would attain their own 'perfection and salvation.'"<sup>16</sup> This is borne out by the title of the seventh part: "On What Pertains to Those Who Have Already Been Incorporated Into the Body of the Society with Regard to the Neighbor, as They Scatter through the Lord's Vineyard." It is here that the Society's distinctive missionary orientation is discussed. The eighth, ninth, and tenth parts are devoted, respectively, to the union between those who are scattered through the Lord's vineyard, the Society's government, and its preservation and development. The *Constitutions* were promulgated in 1553 and officially approved in 1558, two years after Ignatius' death.

Like most of what is contained in the *Industrias*, the metaphor of the instrument will make its way into the *Constitutions*, where it appears a total of seven times.<sup>17</sup> The most significant of these appearances takes place at the opening of the tenth part. Distinguishing between the "exterior" and "interior" aspects of the Society or between its "body" and its "spirit," the *Constitutions* juxtapose an institutional apparatus whose progress can be quantitatively appraised against a "vitality" that is spiritual in nature.<sup>18</sup> Exterior aspects are said to benefit from so-called "human" means. They are human because they concern the Society's existence among other men, its standing as an institution, and the impact it can have on the basis of this standing. They include the pursuit of new vocations, the quest for novices possessed of talents and with a disposition towards solid learning, and a good practice of government, among others.<sup>19</sup> According to the text, these means can help to further the group's mission, but in the end the Society, "which has not been instituted by human means, cannot be preserved or develop through such means, but only with the help of the

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<sup>15</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 336–7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 337.

<sup>17</sup> These are found in *Cons.*, 30; 493; 638; 661; 813; 814.

<sup>18</sup> Antonio M. De Aldama, *Introductory Commentary on the Constitutions*, trans. A. J. Owen (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1989), 303. For Aldama, the "exterior" aspects refer to "the number of subjects, houses, and different works."

<sup>19</sup> *Cons.*, 305–12.

omnipotent hand of Christ our God and Lord.”<sup>20</sup> It is after this hand is mentioned that the instrument appears, with prayer and the *Exercises* in particular as part of what facilitates the union between the two:

For the preservation and development not only of the body, that is to say, the external aspects of the Society, but also of its spirit, and also for the attainment of the objective it seeks, which is to help souls achieve their ultimate and supernatural aim, the means which unite the instrument with God, disposing it so that it may be wielded dexterously by his divine hand, are more effective than those that dispose it towards men. These are the means of goodness and virtue, and especially charity and a pure intention in one’s divine service, as well as familiarity with God our Lord in spiritual exercises of devotion, and the sincere zeal for souls for the glory of the One who created them and redeemed them, and not for any other benefit.<sup>21</sup>

Suárez would distinguish between two possible ways of ‘using’ the *Exercises*. The first kind of use, which he calls ‘passive’ (*passivus*), is the one that members of the Society make for themselves. The second one is an ‘active’ (*activus*) use, and it is, Suárez writes, *pro externis proximis*: it corresponds to the Jesuits’ administration of the *Exercises* to those outside the Society, to the *Exercises* as a tool of ministry. According to Suárez, the passive use takes place, for the first time, on the occasion of one’s admission into the Society. It then takes place every time that Jesuits repeat the *Exercises* throughout their novitiate, “above everything else to instruct themselves and become more experienced in spiritual things.”<sup>22</sup> This use then continues throughout the Jesuit’s life, ideally once every year. The practice of the *Exercises*, Suárez argues, is meant to kindle an “interior devotion” that the Jesuits’ “external actions and occupations” (*externae actiones et occupationes*) might compromise.<sup>23</sup>

Where Suárez speaks of a kindling of devotion, the *Constitutions* speak of a union between God’s hand and the Jesuit. The two can perhaps be

<sup>20</sup> “que no se ha instituido con medios humanos, no puede conservarse ni augmentarse con ellos, sino con la mano omnipotente de Cristo Dios y Señor nuestro.” *Cons.*, 812.

<sup>21</sup> “Para la conservación y aumento no solamente del cuerpo, id est, lo exterior de la Compañía, pero aun del espíritu della, y para la consecución de lo que pretende, que es ayudar las ánimas para que consigan el último y supernatural fin suyo, los medios que juntan el instrumento con Dios y le disponen para que se rija bien de su divina mano, son más efficaces que los que le disponen para con los hombres, como son los medios de bondad y virtud, y specialmente la caridad y pura intención del divino servicio y familiaridad con Dios nuestro Señor en exercicios spirituales de devoción, y el celo sincero de las ánimas por la gloria del que las crió y redimió, sin otro alguno interesse.” *Cons.*, 813.

<sup>22</sup> “vero ut in spiritualibus rebus amplius instaurantur et exerceantur.” Suárez, *Tractatus*, IX.7.8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, IX.7.9.

combined. One can argue, in other words, that the *Exercises* aim to kindle the Jesuit's devotion and to secure his union with the hand of God. What Suárez has to say about the *Exercises'* use suggests that he would probably agree with this statement. His defense of the program's conformity with the threefold division of prayer and with his emphasis on the unitive way, which I discussed in Part One, would also seem to be in agreement with the claim that the *Exercises* aim to unite the Jesuit with God. Of course, when the *Constitutions* speak of this union, it is not in the terms that Suárez has in mind. The kindling of one's interior devotion that he attributes to the *Exercises* pivots on an experience of union that is *mystical* in nature and that comprises, as I noted, a careful consideration of God's "attributes" and "perfections." The assumption is that, fortified by this experience, the Jesuit can return to his activities with renewed zeal. The *Constitutions*, by contrast, speak of a union that is *instrumental* in nature. If there is a union, it is one that incorporates the Jesuit into God's labor. This union finds its consummation in the emergence of the instrument and in its efficacious mobilization. The practice of the *Exercises*, we read, is what disposes the instrument towards the divine hand and what delivers it to its grip. The Jesuit's incorporation into God's labor presents us, in this sense, with a further dimension of Suárez's *usus passivus*, at the same that it clarifies the relation between the two uses. For if the instrument is gripped by the hand of God, it is for the sake of a mobilization in the field of those "activities" that serves as the horizon of the *Exercises'* own *usus activus*. As Polanco states in the *Industrias*, God avails himself of this instrument in order to bestow his grace on others: the Society's purpose, as the *Constitutions* specify, "is to devote itself with God's grace not only to the salvation and perfection of the souls of its members, but also with that same grace to labor strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their fellow men."<sup>24</sup>

The notion of an instrumental union would seem to challenge those interpretations of the *Exercises* as a mystical work. It at least compels one to take a closer look at the objection that the third way is absent from them, an objection that Suárez is quick to dismiss. Were not those who objected to the absence of a concern with union right, if indeed they are intended to facilitate a union that is not mystical? One should not forget, however,

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<sup>24</sup> "es no solamente attender a la salvación y perfección de las ánimas propias con la gracia divina, mas con la misma intensamente procurar de ayudar a la salvación y perfección de las de los próximos." *Cons.*, 3.

that those who objected to this absence considered this absence to be a mark of the *Exercises*' "imperfection." The purported absence of the third way marked for them a *deviation* from an authoritative taxonomy. Those who, like Suárez, took it upon themselves to respond to this objection, did so in a way that upheld the authority of this taxonomy. In so doing, they failed to recognize that what appeared to be a deficiency might have in fact been something else, a positive attribute whose originality, difficult to recognize, announced itself, precisely, as a deficiency. The unitive way is not, properly speaking, absent. If it can appear to be absent, it is because a mystical understanding of union, focused on the kindling of an interior devotion through the contemplation of God's attributes and perfections, is displaced by an instrumental understanding of union, focused on the union between the hand of God and the instrument through which God will act on others. This is not to suggest that this instrumental union cannot be reconciled with the aims of its mystical counterpart. The *Constitutions* in fact suggest the opposite. But as Suárez himself assumes in his discussion of the *Exercises' usus passivus*, if an interior devotion is kindled, it is ultimately for the sake of the instrument's mobilization.

The *Exercises'* foundational significance is often traced back to the so-called Meditation on Two Standards, the contemplation that the *Exercises* prescribe for the fourth day of the second week. The consensus that regards this exercise as a matrix for the Society is, indeed, something of an origin myth, popularized by Jerónimo Nadal but based, according to Everard Mercurian, the Society's fourth General Superior, on a statement that Ignatius himself made.<sup>25</sup> Like the Meditation on the Temporal and the Eternal Kings, this exercise centers on the juxtaposition between two calls. The exercitant is asked to consider "how Christ calls and desires all to place themselves under His standard, and how Lucifer on the contrary wants everyone under his."<sup>26</sup> He is to picture for this purpose a plain extending around Jerusalem and a plain in the environs of Babylon, occupied respectively by Christ and Lucifer. Three points intended to gain "knowledge of the deceptions practiced by the evil leader" follow immediately after, the first of which asks the exercitant to imagine Lucifer, "a

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<sup>25</sup> Mercurian's affirmation, however, exists only as reported by Lancicius. See Blet, "Note sur les origines," 100.

<sup>26</sup> "cómo Christo llama y quiere a todos debaxo de su bandera, y Lucifer, al contrario, debaxo de la suya." *Exx.*, 137.

horrible and fearsome figure," sitting in "a throne of fire and smoke."<sup>27</sup> He is then to think about how Lucifer "calls up innumerable demons, and how he then disperses them, some to one city and others to another, thus covering the entire world, omitting no region, no place, no state of life, nor any individual."<sup>28</sup>

The sections devoted to Christ's address, for their part, present a point-by-point inversion of Lucifer's. Where the *Exercises* ask the exercitant to evoke the multitude of demons and their dispersion through the world, they now ask him to think of the way in which Christ, after selecting his disciples, "sends them out over the whole world spreading his sacred doctrine among all people of every state and condition [*los envía por todo el mundo, esparciendo su sagrada doctrina por todos estados y condiciones de personas*]."<sup>29</sup> It is in this passage that the foundational claims of the Meditation on Two Standards and of the *Exercises* rest. Both the reference to an apostolic dispersion that covers "the whole world" and the emphasis on "sacred doctrine" anticipate distinctive aspects of the Society's mission. It is there that Blet locates "l'intuition centrale" containing "en germe l'idée de la Compagnie."<sup>30</sup>

Aside from what the *Constitutions* themselves say about the *Exercises'* role in the constitution of the instrument, an analysis of the foundational significance of Ignatius' book must also consider its place in the imagination of the Society's core project, which I just discussed. Both of these aspects would seem to corroborate the simple but crucial observation that Leturia makes in his study of the *Exercises*' 'influx' on the Society's *Constitutions*. As I noted in my introductory remarks, Leturia points out that the great religious orders (Benedictines, Cistercians, Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans) brought with them "formas típicas de devoción y vida espiritual," even giving rise in some cases to distinctive "escuelas" of spirituality. The Jesuit order, too, brings its own "typical form" of devotion. But as Leturia is quick to note, a fundamental difference sets it apart from its predecessors: "Su doctrina espiritual," he writes, "vigorosamente definida y aun codificada en el libro de los 'Ejercicios' de S. Ignacio, precede cronológicamente a la fundación de la Orden."<sup>31</sup> Where other "códigos"

<sup>27</sup> *Exx.*, 139–40.

<sup>28</sup> "hace llamamiento de innumerables demonios y cómo los esparce a los unos en tal ciudad y a los otros en otra, y así por todo el mundo, no dexando provincias, lugares, estados, ni personas algunas en particular." *Exx.*, 141.

<sup>29</sup> *Exx.*, 145.

<sup>30</sup> Blet, "Note sur les origines," 100–1.

<sup>31</sup> Pedro de Leturia, "Génesis," 17.

of devotion came into being and matured within communities that were already in existence, the Jesuit code is implicated in a reversal of the traditional relation. It is that code, “acabado apenas de componer por el fundador, el que engendra a la Compañía, formando a los primeros jesuitas e inspirando su primera fórmula.”<sup>32</sup>

Leturia’s analysis of the relation between the *Exercises* and the Society’s *Constitutions* builds upon the work of Arturo Codina, who wrote that in spite of the fundamental differences that separate them, the two works are animated by the same spirit. More exactly, “el espíritu religioso que brota y se consolida en los Ejercicios vivificando interiormente a cada alma se desborda en las Constituciones al campo social.”<sup>33</sup> This notion of a spiritual and interior reality flowing outwards into the social field, where it attains an existence that is historically verifiable, will be echoed by other characterizations of the relation between the two works. For Iparraguirre, the relation is like the one that obtains between a soul and the body it animates: “Los Ejercicios son la médula íntima, el núcleo substancial del espíritu del Santo. En las Constituciones vive el mismo espíritu, pero con cuerpo concreto, al que da vigor y energía. Los Ejercicios necesitan de las Constituciones como el alma del cuerpo, del órgano en que pueda desenvolverse la materia y realizar sus funciones más vitales.”<sup>34</sup>

This way of speaking is as suggestive as it is vague. I believe, indeed, that the foundational dimension of the *Exercises* can be ascertained in more concrete terms. To see this, we must return to the laboring God of whom the *Exercises* speak, and to its relation to the metaphor of the instrument as it appears first in Polanco’s *Industrias* and then in the *Constitutions*. To what extent, one might ask, was this instrument fated to make an appearance in light of the *Exercises’* reference to a laboring God? Such a God would seem to demand an instrument by virtue of the labor that is attributed to him. The *Exercises* are foundational, then, in that it is in them that a God in need of instruments is first mentioned. The terms in which the *Constitutions* characterize the individual Jesuit clearly have their basis in them. However, and as I noted above, the laboring God of the *Exercises* is implicated in a providential relation to the cosmos that, as a result of a reference to man, is in need of a more specific formulation. Concepts like ‘conformation’ and ‘concurrence’ fail to account for God’s

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>34</sup> Iparraguirre makes this statement at the opening of his introduction to the text of the *Constitutions* in his edition of the *Obras completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, 343.

care when this care is directed towards man's salvation. It is in relation to this excess that one must understand Christ and the Church. One thing I hope to show in the following chapter is that the theological debate surrounding this dimension of the concept of providence is one in which the metaphor of the instrument takes center stage. The *Exercises*, then, are also foundational in that they leave us with a vision of God's providential care that opens onto a debate in which the metaphor that is mentioned in the *Constitutions* figures prominently. They are foundational, in other words, not only to the extent that they set the stage for the appearance of the instrument, but also to the extent that they disclose the very problematic on whose basis one must understand that instrument. Reiterating what I stated at the beginning, I should point out that I am interested, ultimately, in what the instrument can tell us about what the Society understood to be its mission and its relation to the world. Can one assess the Society's commitment to instruction and its affirmation of the world, respectively, by reference to the metaphor of the instrument, understood in its specifically providential meaning? The discussion of the theological genealogy of the instrument that I will now undertake aims to answer this question.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SACRAMENTAL INSTRUMENTALITY

Augustine's reference to that work of God's "wherein He worketh hitherto" (according to the quotation from Scripture that would provide a basis for the concept of providence) evokes a statement Christ makes in relation to his own work: "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working" (John 5:17). The statement raises a number of questions, starting with the one concerning the relation between the Father and the Son's respective works. The theological uses of the metaphor of the instrument need to be understood by reference to this question.

That theologians would appeal to something like a rhetoric of instrumentality, with the metaphor of the instrument at its center, should come as no surprise, and not only in light of the metaphor's obvious relation to the problem of work, precisely what is at stake in Christ's statement. The Son himself, as it turns out, is implicitly conceived, starting with the first reflections on the Incarnation, in instrumental terms. We can see this if we return, briefly, to the doctrine of *exinanitio*, which I discussed towards the end of Part One, while analyzing the *Exercises'* treatment of the divinity's concealment in the Passion. As I pointed out, when the *Exercises* state that the divinity goes into "hiding," they are alluding to the consummation, as it were, of the evacuation of divine attributes that, echoing the terms of the famous hymn from Saint Paul's Letter to the Philippians, begins when God is "found in human form" (*schémati heurethis hos anthropos*). Death radicalizes this evacuation, making it seem as though the divinity had definitively and irrevocably retreated. In order to convey the implications of this retreat, the Pauline hymn resorts to a crucial juxtaposition: what is in "very nature a God," we read, takes on "the very nature of a servant." Closer to the Greek original, we can say that what is in "the form of God" (*morphé theou*) takes on "the form of a slave" (*morphén doulos*).

The possibility of conceiving of Christ in instrumental terms rests on this reference to the *doulos*. To see this, we must go beyond a purely typological analysis, according to which the hymn would contain an echo of Isaiah's suffering 'servant' (*ebed*) (Isaiah 53:1–12). Closer to the Greek philosophical milieu with which Paul was engaging, the term *doulos* can instead be said to introduce an 'economic' preoccupation, in the sense

that this word had for Aristotle: Christ's redemptive work is the decisive moment in the 'administration' (*nomos*) of God's 'household' (*oikos*), precisely because as a slave he is the premier instrument of such administration. It suffices in this context to recall what Aristotle has to say in the *Politics*, where he writes that those who devote themselves to the art of managing the household "must have their own proper instruments for the accomplishment of their work." The household, according to a favorite analogy of Aristotle's, is like a ship: it comprises a set of instruments, which can be either inanimate—such as the rudder—or animate—such as the look-out man. When it comes to the household, Aristotle suggests, "the servant is a kind of instrument." He is, however, an animate instrument, and thus unlike the other instruments among which he is found. Such instruments are unable to accomplish their work by themselves, and hence dependent for their deployment on the slave, who is for this very reason "himself an instrument which takes precedence over all other instruments."<sup>1</sup>

The fate of the economic preoccupation that insinuates itself through the *doulos*—the fate, that is, of the concern with God's administrative praxis—lies beyond the scope of this discussion.<sup>2</sup> Instrumentality,

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 1253b. The other instruments, Aristotle writes, are unlike "the statues of Daedalus, or the tripods of Hephaestus, which, says the poet, 'of their own accord entered the assembly of the Gods.'" The shuttle or the lyre are not able to operate, Aristotle writes, "without a hand to guide them." If this were not so, "chief workmen would not want servants, nor masters slaves." Aristotle's distinction between the slave and the other instruments in a household's property is then followed by another distinction between "instruments of production" and "instruments of action." What is used without producing anything is an instrument of action, Aristotle writes, while what is used in order to produce something is an instrument of production. A bed, for example, is simply used. No other thing comes into being as a result of its use. A shuttle, however, can be used to weave a garment. According to Aristotle, the slave is an instrument of action, since although he uses instruments of production, he does not produce anything directly. Cf. *Ibid.*, 1254.

<sup>2</sup> On this preoccupation, see Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 17–52. The word *oikonomia*, Agamben explains, appears for the first time in the writings of the Greek fathers in the context of their attempt to counter accusations that God's oneness was compromised by the doctrine of the Incarnation. The meaning assigned to it was no different from the one that it had acquired in the philosophical milieu in which it originated: *oikonomia*, Agamben writes, was meant to designate the "management" of a household consisting of a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit. Proponents of a divine economy intended the concept to make it possible to approach God's redemptive praxis, and what he did, independently of what he was: this praxis was formulated in terms of a plurality of persons that could be simply set aside where his being, and the oneness that was constitutive of that being, was at stake. In speaking of God's *oikonomia*, then, the Greek fathers thought they had found a way of neutralizing accusations that they had introduced a "polytheistic" principle into theology.

as the discussion of providence showed, is itself closely related to this preoccupation, which indeed cannot be entirely excluded from this analysis. For now, however, I would simply like to remark on the possibility of understanding Christ's redemptive work, in light of his status as a slave, in instrumental terms. Given the central place that the slave ("an instrument which takes precedence over all other instruments") is assigned within salvation history, one can assume that this possibility will have important implications for theology.

A long genealogy of theological speculation, articulated around the metaphor of the instrument, confirms this assumption. This genealogy begins in the 7th century, which is when the instrument emerges as a decisive theological trope.<sup>3</sup> The problem that justifies its mobilization is the same one in relation to which, as I indicated above, the metaphor first insinuates itself: the problem of God's appearance "in human likeness." By now, however, this appearance has been given a more specific formulation, to be found in the so-called 'hypostatic union' between the Word and the flesh.

Three hundred years earlier, the Council of Chalcedon had formulated the doctrine of this union, declaring Christ to have two natures united in one person at once "without division" and "without mingling."<sup>4</sup> This explicit rejection of monophysitism—the doctrine that held Christ to have only one (*mono*) nature (*physis*)—was meant to be definitive, but as it turned out, the doctrine would end up reappearing under different guises. Monothelitism—the doctrine of Christ's one (*mono*) will (*thelema*)—was one of them. Its proponents claimed that if the word 'union' was to be taken seriously, the hypostatic union had to produce a unity: Christ therefore had only one will. Monothelitists argued that it followed from this that each of Christ's operations (*energeia*) had to be single and that each had to be animated by a single principle. Catholics, however, thought that this contradicted the Chalcedonian insistence on a divine and a human

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<sup>3</sup> Théophil Tschipke in fact identifies references to the metaphor in the work of Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Methodius, Eusebius of Cesarea, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Cyril of Alexandria, among others. Only in the 7th century, with the work of Damascene, does the instrument become the object of a systematic treatment. Tschipke writes that Damascene's use of the metaphor is indebted primarily to Athanasius and Cyril. See Théophil Tschipke, *L'humanité du Christ comme instrument de salut de la divinité* (Fribourg: Editions Saint-Paul Fribourg Suisse, 2003), 35–85.

<sup>4</sup> Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, 148.

nature that, while united in one person, retain their own properties and remain differentiated: Christ's operations were for them twofold. If monothelitism was to be eradicated, however, this had to be convincingly and exhaustively specified. How did the two natures work together and what was the relation between their respective operations?

The genealogy I want to trace begins with Damascene's attempt to answer this question in the third book of his *De fide orthodoxa*, a comprehensive and systematic synthesis of the opinions of the Greek fathers which many regard as a precursor of Scholasticism. Damascene's aim is to understand the synergy between Christ's two natures. Not surprisingly, his focus is on Christ's miracles, those operations that make it possible to speak not only of a human but also of a divine operation:

In connection with our Lord Jesus Christ, the power of miracles is the operation of his divinity, while the work of his hands and the willing and the saying, 'I will, be thou clean,' are the operation of his humanity. And as to the effect, the breaking of the loaves, and the fact that the leper heard the 'I will,' belong to his humanity, while the multiplication of the loaves and the purification of the leper belong to his divinity. For through both, that is through the operation of the body and the operation of the soul, he displayed one and the same, cognate and equal divine operation. For just as we saw that his natures were united and permeate one another, and yet do not deny that they are different but even enumerate them, even though we know they are inseparable, so also in connection with the wills and the operation we know their union, and we recognize their difference and enumerate them without introducing separation.<sup>5</sup>

Damascene writes that while it was Christ's humanity that wept for Lazarus and then pronounced the words ordering him to rise, it was his divinity that resurrected him. In no way does he mean to suggest, though, that miracles were done "apart from the flesh." Premised upon Christ's presence among humans, miracles required the operations of the flesh. This, of course, would seem to follow naturally from the suggestion that the two natures are united, but it raises an important question. For Damascene, "the intimate junction" of the two natures results in the flesh's deification. But while the flesh was exalted as a result of its union with the divinity, the relation between both is fundamentally asymmetrical. It suffices to consider in this connection what Damascene has to say about

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<sup>5</sup> Damascene, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. E. W. Watson and L. Pullan (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886), III.15.

“the lowly offices” of the flesh.<sup>6</sup> Joined to the suffering flesh, he writes, the divinity “endured the saving passions” while “remaining without passion,” absorbed as it was in the task of “understanding what was being accomplished.” Christ’s divinity, Damascene concludes, “communicates its own glories to the body while it remains itself without part in the sufferings of the flesh. For his flesh did not suffer through his divinity in the same way that his divinity operated through the flesh. In Christ the human nature acted as the instrument of his divinity [*humana natura in Christo erat velut organum divinitatis*].”<sup>7</sup>

Prior to this discussion, Damascene reflects on human speech and on the possibility of distinguishing between a thought articulated in the form of speech and the speech whereby a thought is articulated.<sup>8</sup> This distinction makes it possible to speak of a more general distinction between operations that belong to the soul making use of the body and to the body as used by the soul. In both, he writes, “the soul sees beforehand what is to be and then performs it thus by means of the body.” Looking closely at a thought that is articulated in the form of speech and at a speech whereby a thought is articulated, it becomes possible to see that “the operation of the body is quite different, for the body is led and moved by the soul.” Damascene then writes that “the hegemony belongs to the soul, for it uses the body as an instrument, leading and restraining it.” As was the case with the instrumental status of the Pauline *doulos*, this mention of the instrument must be understood by reference to Aristotle. Damascene’s source, however, is not the *Politics*, but the opening section of *De anima*, which Aristotle devotes to a refutation of previous conceptions of the soul. It is “absurd,” Aristotle writes, to argue that the soul is “joined” to a body “without adding any specification of the reason of their union.” Aristotle explains that “some community of nature must be presupposed by the fact that the one acts and the other is acted upon, by the fact that the one moves and the other is moved.” Those thinkers who omit specifying this community assume that it is possible “that any soul could be clothed upon with any body.” This, too, is an “absurd” view, for it does not take into account the fact that different bodies exhibit different characteristics.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., IV.18.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., III.15.

<sup>8</sup> In reality the distinction is a fourfold one. It includes, also, a thought regarded in isolation, which Damascene mentions first, and the articulation itself, which is mentioned last. For the purposes of this discussion, however, the two mentioned above, which occupy the second and the third position in Damascene’s classification, will suffice.

It is, in fact, as absurd as to hold “that the art of carpentry could embody itself in flutes; each art must use its tools, each soul its body.”<sup>9</sup>

Damascene speaks of an instrument in order to elucidate the nature of the hypostatic union. If he is indebted to Aristotle, it is in his conception of the instrument as implicated in a kind of union. Paradigmatically instantiated in the body’s instrumentalization by the soul, this kind of union is a special one: like Aristotle, Damascene is of the opinion that there is no other union in nature like it. Precisely because of this, this union can provide a fitting analogue for the synergy between the divine and the human, the most perfect union one can conceive. By speaking of the flesh as the Word’s instrument, then, Damascene is underscoring the exalted status of this union. But as his discussion of the union between soul and body clearly shows, the instrument also has the advantage of conveying the ascendancy of the power that wields it. The instrument is, in this sense, a powerful figure of subjection.

Damascene is concerned with the relation between the Word and the flesh, but the principle of subjection can also be traced in the doctrine of *exinanitio* and in its characterization of the Son. The instrument that the Son becomes as what is in “the form of God” takes on “the form of a slave” remains subject to the will of the Father—Paul’s notion of an obedience *usque ad mortem* captures, precisely, this subjection. The relation between the Father and the Son becomes, in this way, a model for the relation between the Word and the flesh in the Son, with the instrument as the point of convergence of both. As a union of a divine and a human nature, Christ replicates, internally, the broader economy in which he is implicated.

The theological reflection on the instrument will have to wait until Aquinas appears on the scene to undergo a decisive development. The nature of this development is not hard to determine: it concerns Aquinas’ use of the metaphor of the instrument to explicate the nature of the sacraments.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, *De anima*, 407b. The particularities of the instrumental relation are outlined later, in the course of the discussion of how the soul relates to the “organs” of sense.

<sup>10</sup> My focus in what follows is on Aquinas’ discussion of instrumentality as it appears in the *Summa theologiae* and in the *Summa contra gentiles*, the two works associated with his “mature” period. Comprehensive treatments of the question, which my own analysis draws upon, can be found in Tschipke, *L’humanité du Christ*, 109–74; Paul Crowley, “Instrumentum Divinitatis in Thomas Aquinas: Recovering the Divinity of Christ,” *Theological Studies*, no. 52 (1991): 451–75; Bernhard Blankenhorn, “The Instrumental Causality of the

Initially meant to shed light on the hypostatic union, Damascene's *organum* allows Aquinas to explicate, too, the workings of the institutional mediation of salvation necessitated by Christ's absence from the world.

Aquinas' discussion of the sacramental administration of grace in the *Summa* opens with an inquiry into that dimension of the sacraments that exceeds their status as signs.<sup>11</sup> Aquinas is interested, in other words, not only in the "cognitive" function routinely ascribed to sacraments, in their capacity to *signify* grace; he is concerned, too, with the sacraments' "operative" function, with their capacity to *cause* grace.<sup>12</sup>

If it is true, as tradition teaches, that grace is a sacrament's "effect," does it not follow, given that every effect has a cause, that sacraments are "causes" of grace? Aquinas starts by arguing that they are not, and notes that "the same thing cannot be both sign and cause, since the nature of a sign appears to be more in keeping with an effect." (Aquinas is alluding here to the classical example of smoke as a "sign" of fire.) Having shown that a sacrament is "a sign of grace," it does not seem possible to

Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," *Nova et Vetera* 4, no. 2 (2006): 255–94.

<sup>11</sup> Is a sacrament, Aquinas asks, a kind of sign? Etymology seems at first to suggest the contrary: "For sacrament [*sacramentum*] appears to be derived from 'sacrificing [*sacrando*],' just as medicament derives from 'healing [*medicando*]'." But this seems to be of the nature of a cause rather than of a sign. Therefore a sacrament is a kind of cause rather than a kind of sign." ST, III, q. 6o, art. 1. The consensus surrounding the sacraments' status as signs (Lombard's *Sentences* are exemplary in this regard) was in fact an unintended consequence of the refutation of a position considered to be heretical. Augustine himself, in several of his writings, had spoken of sacraments as sacred signs, yet the term *sacramentum* was only vaguely defined, thereby preventing it from becoming a technical term. Cf. William A. van Roo, *The Christian Sacrament* (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1992), 39. (Roo refers, specifically, to Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, 10.5.) For a long time, as Irène Rosier-Catach writes, the dominant definition of sacraments was the one proposed not by Augustine, but by Isidore of Seville: a sacrament was not a *sacrum signum* but a *sacrum secretum*. Irène Rosier-Catach, *La Parole efficace: signe, rituel, sacré* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), 39. Only in light of the attempt to defend the subsistence of the bread and the wine after the consecration did theologians direct their attention to the sacrament's status as a *signum*. The conception of sacraments as signs found support in those who refused to believe that the bread and the wine ceased to exist after their conversion. Viewing them as signs became, for them, a way to convincingly account for their subsistence—the bread and the wine remained what they were, and in their distinction from what they were supposed to have been transformed from they emerged as signs, the nature of which consists, as Augustine had indicated, in making something else known. Rosier-Catach suggests that even if this position was condemned as heretical, the attention that its main proponents devoted to this signifying function bestowed upon the conception of sacraments as *signa sacra* a technical precision that would later make it difficult to discard it, and that would prove fundamental to the emergence of a consensus. *Ibid.*, 39–40.

<sup>12</sup> The distinction between a 'cognitive' and an 'operative' function is developed by Rosier-Catach, *La Parole efficace*, 76.

say that it can also be its cause. Paul's discussion of baptism in Galatians, however, leaves no doubt that sacraments "in some way" (*per aliquem modum*) cause grace: "As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ," Paul writes. Clothing oneself with Christ, however, is only possible as a result of grace. For Aquinas, this is enough indication that the sacraments do cause grace. It is a question, then, of specifying whether they do so "by their own operation" or "in so far as God causes grace in the soul when the sacraments are employed." Do sacraments have an "intrinsic power" or are they simply "occasions" for sanctification?

If, as Bernard Blankenhorn has shown, Aquinas rejects the "occasionalism" espoused by some of his predecessors, it is because it compromises the sacraments' status as true causes.<sup>13</sup> Occasionalists, to paraphrase Aquinas, illustrate the sacraments' function through the example of a coin whose possession entitles one to receive a certain amount of money. There is nothing in the coin that accounts for this, which is in fact the "effect" of the king's command specifying what is to be expected from the transaction. This example turns sacraments into "mere signs," incapable, like the coin, of achieving anything of their own.<sup>14</sup> This is contrary to the opinion that holds sacraments to be both signs and causes of sanctification. If they really are causes and not simply occasional signs for sanctification, then sacraments must be shown to cause grace "by their own operation." The language of instrumentality is what eventually makes this possible:

We must therefore say otherwise, that an efficient cause is twofold, principal and instrumental. The principal cause works by the power of its form, to which form the effect is likened; just as fire by its own heat makes something hot. In this way none but God can cause grace: since grace

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<sup>13</sup> Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments," 261; 287. Aquinas seems committed to underscoring the sacraments' status as true causes already in his early commentary on the *Sentences*.

<sup>14</sup> "They give as an example a man who, upon presenting a leaden coin, receives, by the king's command, a hundred pounds: not as though the leaden coin, by any operation of its own, caused him to be given that sum of money; this being the effect of the mere will of the king. Hence Bernard says in a sermon on the Lord's Supper: Just as a canon is invested by means of a book, an abbot by means of a crozier, a bishop by means of a ring, so by the various sacraments various kinds of grace are conferred.' But if we examine the question properly, we shall see that according to the above mode, the sacraments are mere signs. For the leaden coin is nothing but a sign of the king's command that this man should receive money. In like manner, the book is a sign of the conferring of a canonry. Hence, according to this opinion, the sacraments of the New Law would be mere signs of grace; whereas we have it on the authority of many saints that the sacraments of the New Law not only signify, but also cause grace." ST, III, q. 62, art. 1.

is nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature, according to 2 Peter 1:4: "He hath given us most great and precious promises; that we may be partakers of the Divine Nature." But the instrumental cause works not by the power of its form, but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent, so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent: for instance, the couch is not like the axe, but like the art which is in the craftsman's mind. And it is thus that the sacraments of the New Law cause grace: for they are instituted by God to be employed for the purpose of conferring grace. Hence Augustine says (*Contra Faust.* xix): "All these things," viz. pertaining to the sacraments, "are done and pass away, but the power," viz. of God, "which works by them, remains ever." Now, that is, properly speaking, an instrument by which someone works: wherefore it is written (*Titus* 3:5): "He saved us by the laver of regeneration."<sup>15</sup>

I pointed out earlier that Aquinas' contribution to the genealogy that I am tracing lies in his use of Damascene's metaphor to explain the sacraments. This passage suggests, however, that what makes the metaphor useful is its capacity to illustrate a certain causality, precisely what Aquinas considers to be at stake in the sacraments. The instrument appears as the embodiment of a certain kind of causality, a secondary causality. This is also how the instrument appears in Aristotle, Damascene's source. Damascene's concern, however, is with union, so he does not emphasize this aspect of the instrument. The instrument he speaks of is the instrument of which we read in Aristotle's *De anima*, and not the one discussed, for example, in the *Politics*. Aquinas' use of Aristotle's *organon*, by contrast, remains attentive to the entirety of Aristotle's discussion.<sup>16</sup> This is evident

<sup>15</sup> "Et ideo aliter dicendum, quod duplex est causa agens, principalis et instrumentalis. Principalis quidem operatur per virtutem suae formae, cui assimilatur effectus, sicut ignis suo calore calefacit. Et hoc modo non potest causare gratiam nisi Deus, quia gratia nihil est aliud quam quedam participata similitudo divinae naturae, secundum illud II Pet. I, *magna nobis et pretiosa promissa donavit, ut divinae simus consortes naturae*. Causa vero instrumentalis non agit per virtutem suae formae, sed solum per motum quo movetur a principali agente. Unde effectus non assimilatur instrumento, sed principali agenti, sicut lectus non assimilatur securi, sed arti quae est in mente artificis. Et hoc modo sacramenta novae legis gratiam causant, adhibent enim ex divina ordinatione ad gratiam in eis causandam. Unde Augustinus dicit, XIX contra Faust., haec omnia, scilicet sacramentalia, flunt et transeunt, virtus tamen, scilicet Dei, quae per ista operatur, iugiter manet. Hoc autem proprie dicitur instrumentum, per quod aliquis operatur. Unde et Tit. III dicitur, *salvos nos fecit per lavacrum regenerationis.*" Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> As Blankenhorn suggests, the instrument of which Aquinas speaks in his mature period is a hybrid concept, the product of the encounter of Aristotelian instrumentality and Damascene's understanding of Christ's humanity as *organum divinitatis*. Blankenhorn begins his discussion of this mature period by citing two factors for this evolution. The first is the "Greek turn" made possible by Aquinas' move to the Dominican priory of Orvieto, in close proximity to the papal library. It was there that he had access to a wealth

in his attempt to explicate what for him are the three central problems that sacraments raise:

1. The first of these problems concerns the power to be ascribed to the sacraments. Aquinas writes that the fact that sacraments are causes in the same way that instruments are causes—by reference to a principal efficient cause—could imply that they lack a power of their own. When it comes to an instrument, however, it is possible to speak of two actions: an “instrumental” action, originating not in “its own power” but in “the power of the principal agent,” and a “proper” action, which belongs to the instrument “in respect of its proper form.” An axe can cut things because of its sharpness, Aquinas explains, but it can make a couch only as the instrument of an art. At the same time, only “by exercising its proper action” can this instrument accomplish the instrumental action: in other words, “it is by cutting that [an axe] makes a couch.”<sup>17</sup> On the basis of this last observation, Aquinas can later challenge those who “deny the sacraments any power that is itself productive of the sacramental effect, and hold that the divine power assists the sacraments and produces their effect.” To claim that a sacrament is an instrumental cause of grace is to imply that there is in the sacraments a power that “is proportionate to the instrument.”<sup>18</sup>

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of patristic and conciliar documents not so easily available in Paris. Aquinas was able to place Damascene’s definition of Christ’s humanity in relation to the Christology of Athanasius, John Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria (275). The other factor is found in “a new approach to the metaphysics of instrumentality” that takes into account the possibility of “creaturely participation” in God’s plan of salvation, the model for which was provided by the hypostatic union in its Chalcedonian formulation (278). Thus, if Aquinas’ discussion of the operative function of sacraments up until the *De veritate* had restricted the instrument’s participation in the power that yields it, starting with the *Summa contra gentiles* they are considered, as instruments modeled after Christ’s humanity, to participate in the saving power of this humanity. “A developed philosophy of instrumental efficacy allows us to grasp the possibility of a radical creaturely participation in divine operations,” Blankenhorn writes. “The reality of such an instrumental causality is realized in and by the hypostatic union. Such a union surpasses all created unions in intensity, so it is best described by analogy with the most profound union found within creation, that of body and soul” (277). This accounts for Aquinas’ decision to abandon all references to a merely ‘disposing,’ as opposed to a ‘perfecting,’ causality in his treatment of the sacraments. Rosier-Catach comments on this transition, and points out that the influence of Aquinas remained strong: Duns Scotus’ critique of Aquinas’ metaphysics of causality focused, precisely, on this disposing dimension. Cf. Rosier-Catach, *La Parole efficace*, 140–56.

<sup>17</sup> *ST*, III, q. 62, art. 4.

<sup>18</sup> *ST*, III, q. 62, art. 1, ad. 2. Aquinas’ insistence that the instrument has a “proper” and an “instrumental” action and that the instrumental action depends on the proper action resonates with Damascene’s claim that the flesh played an active part in Christ’s salvific deeds. The whole insistence on attributing an “intrinsic” power to the sacraments is consistent, indeed, with that exaltation of the instrument, and that insistence on its dignity, that Damascene saw as a concomitant of its mobilization.

2. The second problem concerns the determination of the principal efficient cause behind the sacraments. Aquinas suggests that since the story recorded in the Gospels makes it impossible to think of salvation without reference to the fact that the Word became flesh, a discussion of the sacraments' own saving action and of their intrinsic power should place the Incarnation, and the instrumentalization of the flesh, at its center. In keeping with this demand, he concludes that the sacraments derive their power from Christ's Passion, the event that most dramatically discloses the stakes of the flesh's instrumentalization. Grace, however, is something spiritual, and this means that the principal efficient cause of grace is to be found in an instrumental action that has its source, ultimately, in the divinity. In other words, "the saving power has to be derived by the sacraments from Christ's divinity through his humanity."<sup>19</sup> Translated into the terms he has been employing until now, Aquinas is suggesting here that the sacramental instrument derives its saving power from the divinity through the divinity's instrument. Two different instruments (the sacraments themselves and the flesh) converge in this suggestion, creating the need for a reflection on the "twofold" (*duplex*) nature of an instrument and for a distinction between a "separate" (*separatum*) and a "conjoined" (*coniunctum*) instrument. While separate instruments, as their name indicate, have an independent existence from the one who wields them, conjoined instruments do not. Separate instruments, moreover, are moved by the conjoined instruments. The example that best illustrates the distinction is that of the walking stick (*baculus*) that is moved by the hand (*manus*). Aquinas writes that, just as the stick is moved by the hand, "the separate instrument is moved by means of the conjoined instrument," and concludes from this that something similar happens in the sacraments: "The principal efficient cause of grace is God himself, in comparison with whom Christ's humanity is like a conjoined instrument, whereas the sacrament is like a separate instrument."<sup>20</sup> Christ's humanity, to continue with the analogy, is the hand that wields the sacraments.

3. The third problem concerns the historical situation, so to speak, that conditions the instrument's mobilization. Christ's humanity is the hand that wields the sacraments, ensuring that they act like "channels" through which its benefits can "flow into the soul" of believers, yet why are such channels necessary in the first place? To claim, as Aquinas does, that the

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<sup>19</sup> *ST*, III, q. 62, art. 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

sacraments are proportionate to a condition which, like the human, “is such that it has to be led by things corporeal and sensible to things spiritual and intelligible” is certainly not enough. This serves simply to justify the sacraments’ “thingly” status, the fact that they are composed of both “form” and “matter.”<sup>21</sup> The need for sacraments is to be accounted for differently, through a careful consideration of the source of their power. By his Passion, Aquinas writes, Christ made satisfaction for the sins of the human race. The benefits of this satisfaction thus have the capacity to extend to all men. Christ’s Passion functions, Aquinas notes, as the “universal cause” of salvation, and this means that it “must be applied specially to each one [*applicari ad unumquemque specialiter*].”<sup>22</sup> The benefits of Christ’s death must be “conjoined” to individual men, and this can only happen through the “remedies” that sacraments are.<sup>23</sup> The universal in need of this application, of course, is not only not particularized, but also part of the past. As Aquinas writes, “the figure should cease with the advent of the truth.” This suggests that there should be no need for sacraments after the Passion, the truth to which sacraments point. Signs, of course, can signify not only the future, but also the past. Sacraments are necessary, precisely, as protestations of faith in the historicity of Christ’s Passion.<sup>24</sup> The application of the universal cause of salvation unfolds against a historical situation defined, in short, by Christ’s absence.

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<sup>21</sup> *ST*, III, q. 61, a. 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, IV.55, n. 29.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.56, n. 1. The sacraments are thus meant to secure the “special application” outside of which the effects of the universal cause cannot be received, and in the absence of which the cause would seem to have lost its efficacy. *Ibid.*, IV.55, n. 29. The point is succinctly recapitulated in the *Summa*: “Christ’s passion is a sufficient cause of man’s salvation. But it does not follow that the sacraments are not also necessary for that purpose: because they obtain their effect through the power of Christ’s passion; and Christ’s passion is, so to say, applied to man through the sacraments according to the Apostle (Romans 6:3): ‘All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death.’” *ST*, III, q. 61, art. 1, ad. 3. Aquinas remarks on the sacraments’ “likeness” to the universal cause, on the fact that they are sensuous realities like the incarnate Word. In this sense they are also proportioned to men, proving that as with his revelation in Christ, when it comes to the remedies meant to ensure the universal efficacy of Christ’s passion, God provides according to man’s condition. The sacraments’ application of the universal cause unfolds as an attestation of this principle, and ultimately as an evocation of the incarnation. The particularization of the universal cause implicit in its application, which is always an *applicatio unicuique*, evokes the particularization of the Word. Ultimately, this concern with the particular extends to the agent responsible for ensuring that the power of the universal cause reaches men. That angels might be competent to dispense the sacraments is thus out of the question. The sacraments, Aquinas writes, “must be dispensed by visible men.” *Contra Gentiles*, IV.74, n. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *ST*, III, q. 61, art. 4.

The disclosure of this historical situation is crucial in that it reveals the need for ministers: "Since Christ was about to withdraw His bodily presence from the Church," Aquinas writes, "it was necessary that he should establish other ministers in his place who would dispense the sacraments to the faithful."<sup>25</sup> To resort to the terms laid out above, we can say that between the hand from which the instrument derives its power and the instrument itself there is another term, the need for which is justified by the fact that it is itself proportionate to the kind of dispensation entrusted to the instrument: applied to the communication of grace in the sacrament, the principle that "every action ought to be proportioned to its agent" means that the sacraments "must be dispensed by visible men who have spiritual power." Aquinas denies angels the competency to dispense the sacraments, writing that this belongs "to men clothed in visible flesh."<sup>26</sup> The demand for proportionality applies, however, in both directions. As is the case with the sacraments themselves, when it comes to these men clothed in visible flesh one can expect them to be endowed, too, with a spiritual power. This is the function of the sacrament of orders, which confers upon particular men the power to administer the sacraments and constitutes them as ministers. It is in relation to this sacrament that the instrument makes one further decisive appearance:

But a minister is compared to his lord as an instrument to its principal agent, for, as an instrument is moved by the agent for making something, so the minister is moved by his lord's command to accomplish something. Of course, the instrument must be proportionate to the agent. Hence, the ministers of Christ must be in conformity with him. But Christ, as the Lord, by his very own authority and power wrought our salvation, in that he was God and man: so far as he was man, in order to suffer for our redemption; and, so far as he was God, to make His suffering salutary for us. Therefore, the ministers of Christ must not only be men, but must participate somehow in his divinity through some spiritual power, for an instrument shares in the power of its principal agent. Now, it is this power that the Apostle calls "the power which the Lord hath given me unto edification and not unto destruction" (2 Cor. 13:10).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, IV.74, n. 2. The point is taken up by the Roman Catechism, which declares the visible sign and the minister to be equally important: "To constitute a sacrament, as the unbroken tradition of the fathers testifies, matter and form are not more necessary than is the ministry of men." *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii tridentini ad parochos* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1856), II.1.19.

<sup>26</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, IV.74, n.1.

<sup>27</sup> "Minister autem comparatur ad dominum sicut instrumentum ad principale agens: sicut enim instrumentum movetur ab agente ad aliquid efficiendum, sic minister movetur

I pointed out above that, as a cipher of the instrumental union of a divine and a human nature, Christ bears within himself the imprint of the economy in which he is implicated—that the servant, by definition an instrument, is himself possessed of an instrumental status. This instrumental structure, as we can now see, is also in effect in that moment of the economy in which, in the wake of Christ's withdrawal from the world in bodily presence, the administration of grace unfolds through the mediation of the institution and its ministers. Like the sacramental action, the one in charge of it, too, is an instrument. This means that he is something excess of a man.<sup>28</sup>

In the first part of this study, I paused to consider Ignatius' relation, expressed in the eleventh of the *Exercises*' Rules for Thinking with the Church, to the so-called "scholastic" theologians. I did so with the aim of underscoring the importance, as far as the *Exercises* are concerned, of their counterparts, the "positive" theologians. My intention was not to deny the importance of the scholastics; I simply wanted to question the tendency to interpret the rule as an indication that Ignatius' writings are to be read exclusively with the scholastics in mind. This seemed necessary in order to account, as was my purpose then, for the *Exercises*' concern with the problem of use: Augustine, one of the "positive" theologians mentioned by Ignatius, has much to say that is of great relevance to the discussion of this problem.

I pointed out while discussing 'use,' however, that I was less interested in arguing for Augustine's influence—even if there were decisive indications of it—than in the heuristic possibilities of his definition. What can one discover about the *Exercises*' own understanding of 'use' by confronting what we read there with his definition? That was the question that

imperio domini ad aliquid exequendum. Oportet autem instrumentum esse proportionatum agenti. Unde et ministros Christi oportet esse ei conformes. Christus autem, ut dominus, auctoritate et virtute propria nostram salutem operatus est, inquantum fuit Deus et homo: ut secundum id quod homo est, ad redemptionem nostram pateretur; secundum autem quod Deus, passio eius nobis fieret salutaris. Oportet igitur et ministros Christi homines esse, et aliquid divinitatis eius participare secundum aliquam spiritualem potestatem: nam et instrumentum aliquid participat de virtute principalis agentis. De hac autem potestate apostolus dicit, II ad Cor. ult., quod *potestatem dedit ei dominus in aedificationem, et non in destructionem.*" Ibid., IV.74, n.2.

<sup>28</sup> The passage states this rather explicitly. To the extent that as an instrument he is implicated in an instrumental action, the minister is unlike other men. Aquinas' sacramental theology might mark a departure from Damascene's treatment of the metaphor of the instrument, but he never forgets his predecessor's basic axiom. The instrument's mobilization results in its exaltation.

oriented my reading. That the scholastic theologians are indeed a crucial point of reference for Ignatius (as stated by the rule in question) is something that commentators have established quite definitively. The claim is in no need of further evidence, but that should not dissuade one from pointing out that the *Constitutions'* appeal to the metaphor of the instrument also serves as an indication of it.<sup>29</sup> As I prepare to proceed to the chapters that follow, however, I should stress that, as with the case with Augustine's theology of use, the genealogy I just sketched, and the understanding of the metaphor of the instrument that emerges from it, have for me a primarily heuristic value. I am interested, as I noted above, in assessing the Society's mission and its relation to the world from the perspective of the metaphor of the instrument. What can we discover about the Society's commitment to instruction and its affirmation of the world, respectively, on the basis of the metaphor, understood in terms of this genealogy?

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<sup>29</sup> Once again, I direct the reader to O'Malley's lucid summary of Aquinas' place in Ignatius' thought in *The First Jesuits*, 247–250.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### INSTRUCTION

It should be clear by now that the metaphor of the instrument as it appears in the *Constitutions* evokes a venerable theological trope. It is surprising, therefore, to learn that it has been all but neglected by scholars of the Society's foundation. Simply to speak of an "echo" of an element from the theological imaginary of Catholicism would of course not be enough to remedy this state of affairs. But nor is it sufficient to say that the metaphor's presence in the Society's normative documents betrays an awareness, on the part of the group itself, of its own inscription within a divine economy, a topic that has recently interested scholars concerned about the tendency to view some of the Society's achievements in too secular a light.<sup>1</sup> In the final analysis, the metaphor serves not only to *attest* to the group's participation in God's salvific praxis but also to *conceptualize* this participation. This conceptualization, as I have suggested from the start, centers on two aspects. The metaphor has something to say about the Society's mission and its relation to the world, about the task that defines the Society's participation in God's praxis and about the domain of this praxis. I leave the second question for the next chapter. My focus in what follows will be on the metaphor's relation to the Society's mission.

This mission is, as it turns out, etymologically marked. It announces itself in the Latin word *instruere*, 'to equip,' from which the noun *instrumentum*, 'equipment,' is derived. Both refer to the field of *instruction*, a word at whose origin *instruere* also lies. Understood in the broad sense of 'teaching,' instruction gives us the task which by most accounts will define the Jesuit instrument. It should come as no surprise, then, if one of the most extended discussions of the metaphor (and a welcome exception to its generalized neglect) centers on its relation to the Society's pedagogical mission.

Confronted with the Jesuit instrument as it appears in the *Constitutions*, Michael Buckley asks whether it might shed light on the educational enterprise that, officially at least, begins in 1551, with the opening of the

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<sup>1</sup> Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 238–57.

Society's first college, in Messina, Sicily.<sup>2</sup> The Society's commitment to education, starting with Ignatius' own conviction that learning makes one more effective in helping others secure their own salvation, has been amply chronicled.<sup>3</sup> Buckley's question, however, signals a welcome and important departure from the tendency to privilege, whenever this commitment is at stake, the programmatic statements advanced in the *Ratio studiorum* (1599), the official document outlining the Jesuit philosophy of education. While in agreement with other scholars who hold this philosophy to be central, he argues that the Society's pedagogical enterprise has its source in a "spirituality" rather than in a philosophy, and that it is this spirituality, ultimately rooted in Ignatius' own spirituality, that distinguishes the Society's pedagogical commitments from comparable initiatives.<sup>4</sup>

For Buckley this spirituality is encapsulated in the metaphor of the instrument. What is most distinctive about this spirituality is its belief in a synergy between the divine and the human realms and in this synergy's sanctifying effects. Buckley traces both to the *Contemplatio ad amorem* and to its "fundamental understanding of the religious density of all things within and because of the action of God."<sup>5</sup> This understanding, he writes, rests on the *Contemplatio*'s own reference to things as "gifts." The decision to speak of God *ad modum laborantis* in turn suggests these gifts to be implicated in God's salvific work. They are thus "providential" in nature.<sup>6</sup> Now, if it is true that God labors through everything, Buckley writes, then one must assign a "real importance" to the "natural talents" with which different individuals are endowed. They, too, deserve to be numbered among the "gifts through and in which God labors."<sup>7</sup> Here Buckley is evoking Aquinas' axiom regarding the instrument's possession of a "proper" action, an action proportionate to its own nature. A pedagogical

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<sup>2</sup> For a brief overview of the Society's pedagogical initiative see O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 202–6.

<sup>3</sup> O'Malley comments on Ignatius' claim in his *Autobiography* that upon returning from Palestine he wanted to study so as to be able to better help the souls of others: "The belief in a relationship between learning and effective ministry that underlay this decision was traditional. Nonetheless, Ignatius was born into an age in which arguments for that relationship and, indeed, for an intrinsic relationship between education and an upright life had been propounded with new insistence and from a new viewpoint ever since Petrarch, the Father of humanism, first made them popular in the 14th century." *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>4</sup> Buckley, *The Catholic University as Promise and Project*, 81–2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

program like the one later codified in the *Ratio studiorum*, he suggests, aims to recognize and to cultivate the nature according to which an instrument acts, and thus ultimately to ensure that an instrument operates at its optimum.

Instruction, then, is the task that would come to define the Jesuit instrument. This is true, first and foremost, as regards the very constitution of the instrument, prior to its instruction of others. Ignatius believed that learning makes one more effective in helping others, as is evident not only in his decision to pursue university studies after his return from Jerusalem, but also in his desire, expressed in the *Constitutions*, that Jesuits be committed to learning. The determination not to focus exclusively on one's own perfection remains, however, decisive, so that in the final analysis instruction proves defining, also, as regards the instrument's action on others. Thus we arrive at the concept of *doctrina*, which Buckley rightly regards as central to any discussion of the instrument and its relation to instruction.<sup>8</sup>

The word *doctrina* can designate a body of knowledge. This meaning, in its relation the Society, is the subject of a comprehensive survey by Anita Mancia. From the *Exercises'* appearance to the promulgation of the *Ratio studiorum*, she argues, the word *doctrina* comprised Scripture, the writings of the Church fathers, Scholastic theology, and councils, canons, and encyclicals. This notion of *doctrina* as doctrine, a set of beliefs, is aligned with the Church's magisterium and with an ecclesiology that emphasizes the hierarchical Church.<sup>9</sup> I agree with Mancia, but it seems to me that when the *Constitutions* speak of *doctrina*, it is in order to designate not only the possession of a body of knowledge, but also the *activity* of instruction itself. The two meanings do not exist independently of one another. The activity of instruction is premised, indeed, in the possession of this knowledge. This is in accord with the Augustinian understanding of *doctrina* as a knowledge that is only fulfilled in its dissemination.<sup>10</sup> As the *Constitutions* indicate, "solid and well-grounded learning [*doctrina fun-*

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>9</sup> Anita Mancia, "Il concetto di 'dottrina' fra gli *Esercizi Spirituali* (1539) e la *Ratio Studiorum* (1599)," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 61 (1992): 3–70. Mancia traces this meaning to the *Exercises'* Rules for Thinking with the Church, leaving out the concept's crucial appearance in the Meditation on Two Standards.

<sup>10</sup> *Doctrina* as Augustine understands it deserves to be included among that category of things, mentioned at the beginning of *De doctrina*, "which do not give out when given away," and which are therefore "not properly possessed when they are possessed but not given away." *De doctrina Christiana*, I.2.

*dada y sólida]*" is one of the means that "dispose the instrument of God our Lord towards its neighbors [*disponen el instrumento de Dios nuestro Señor para con los próximos*]." Precisely because of this relation to the neighbor, though, the cultivation of natural talents entrusted to education should not end in the Jesuit's acquisition of *doctrina*. The *Constitutions* place a premium, also, on the "method of proposing it to the people by means of sermons and lectures [*modo de proponerla al pueblo en sermones y lecciones*]."<sup>11</sup> This reference to the manner of *doctrina*'s dissemination is crucial. It suggests that instruction is not to be restricted to education, at least not to the education that took place in the Society's schools, and should instead encompass everything that can be brought under what the *Formula* refers to as the "ministries of the Word of God."<sup>12</sup>

The overwhelming success of the Society's pedagogical mission can seem surprising in light of the fact that formal education is not mentioned in the *Formula*. This success also makes it tempting to think of the instrument's instructional vocation as having been fated to be fulfilled in the group's pedagogical commitments. Even if the field of instruction is much more wide, it is true that the Society's pedagogical mission serves as a paradigm for instruction. In this respect, one has only to consider the place assigned, within this mission, to Renaissance humanism. The Society's role in the diffusion of the humanist curriculum and the curriculum's impact on the Society's various engagements has been the subject of numerous studies.<sup>13</sup> Here it should suffice to call attention to the compatibility between rhetoric, one of the centerpieces of the *studia humanitatis*, and *doctrina*.<sup>14</sup> Not only is the so-called art of discourse the natural support of a praxis whose own foundations in discourse become apparent in its relation to the ministries of the Word and, more specifically, in homiletics.<sup>15</sup> Humanist rhetoricians themselves associated rhetoric with

<sup>11</sup> *Cons.*, 814.

<sup>12</sup> On this concept, see O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 91–133.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Mario Fois, "La giustificazione cristiana degli studi umanistici da parte di Ignazio di Loyola e le sue conseguenze nei gesuiti posteriori," in *Ignacio de Loyola y su Tiempo*, ed. Juan Plazaola (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 1992), 405–440; John Olin, "The Jesuits, Humanism, and History," in *Erasmus, Utopia, and the Jesuits: Essays on the Outreach of Humanism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1994), 85–105; Charles G. Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 179–80; Marc Fumaroli, "The Fertility and the Shortcomings of Renaissance Rhetoric," 90–106.

<sup>14</sup> Buckley remarks on the place of rhetoric itself in the development of the instrument. Cf. *The Catholic University as Promise and Project*, 88.

<sup>15</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 91–103.

'teaching' in what is an unambiguous indication of the important, even if contested, place of Augustine and his own *De doctrina*.<sup>16</sup>

Through its more specific articulation in the form of *doctrina* and through the reference to rhetoric that *doctrina* itself implies, instruction becomes an expression of the Society's engagement with a humanist understanding of individual existence as necessarily inscribed within a public sphere and hence as inherently addressed to others. This ideal is precisely what lies at the heart of what the *Constitutions* call *conversación*, a word that first appears in the *Formula* as one of the *consueta ministeria*. In that specific case it designates a devout exchange about matters related to the spiritual life; outside of this ministerial sense, however, the word has two distinct meanings. On the one hand, *conversación* can designate any verbal exchange, and not simply that which concerns the spiritual life. On the other hand, the word can also designate the wider notion of commerce, in the sense of social dealings with others. It is this second meaning that interests me here, as it is that meaning that is at stake when the word is used to characterize the Society's vocation.

Darío Restrepo remarks on Ignatius' wish around the time of his conversion to become a Carthusian so as to call attention to the paradoxical fact that someone bent on reaching a "santidad silenciosa y solitaria" would be responsible for a religious order "eminente social," whose mission consists in "hablar de Dios con todos los prójimos."<sup>17</sup> The *conversación* he goes on to analyze views this speech, and the whole ministry of spiritual conversation, as a manifestation of that "social" element. Underscored as early as the "General Examen," which serves as a preamble to the *Constitutions*, this element in fact recurs throughout the text. One revealing instance is found in the discussion of why it is not wise to admit into the Society people with deformities:

It must be noted that persons who have notable disfigurements or defects, such as humpbacks and other deformities, whether they be natural or accidental such as those from wounds and the like, are not suitable for this Society. For these defects are obstacles to the priesthood and do not help towards the edification of the neighbors with whom, according to our

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<sup>16</sup> John Monfasani, "Renaissance Humanism," in *Augustine Through the Ages*, ed. Allan Fitzgerald (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 716.

<sup>17</sup> Darío Restrepo, "Conversación," in *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, vol. 1 (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 2007), 472.

institute, it is necessary to deal [*no ayudan para la edificación de los próximos, con quienes es menester conversar según nuestro instituto*].<sup>18</sup>

The importance of conversation can be traced to the *Exercises'* emphasis, through the prayers and colloquies that frame each meditation, on a dialogue between the exercitant and God himself.<sup>19</sup> This dialogue in turn exists in relation to the exchange between the director and the exercitant, an exchange endowed, precisely, with that social dimension that characterizes conversation in the sense of commerce. Echoing the passage quoted above, and its assertion that conversation is stipulated by the *Formula*, the *Constitutions* speak of the Society as an institution “that has to associate with so great a diversity of persons [*que por tan varias partes conversa con tanta diversidad de personas*],” while the passage that speaks of the propagation of *doctrina* in lectures and sermons goes on to assimilate both to the Society’s aim of “dealing and conversing with people [*tratar y conversar con las gentes*].”<sup>20</sup> Aside from these and other passages from the *Constitutions*, one could also mention a number of Ignatius’ letters. Writing to Diego Mirón, for example, Ignatius indicates that, according to the Society’s vocation, “we converse with everyone [*conversamos con todos*].”<sup>21</sup> Mirón, who was stationed in Portugal, had written to Ignatius to communicate that he had declined King John III’s offer to be named as his confessor. He justified his decision by appealing to Ignatius’ own desire that official dignities were to be avoided by Jesuits. Ignatius objected, arguing that a *conversación con todos* should include people from all social strata, all the way up to royals—it would be wrong, for example, to think that the Society must only address itself to the poor. In his mind, King John III had presented Mirón with an opportunity to realize that ideal.

Paul Legavre, a scholar to whom we owe one of the few reflections on the metaphor of the instrument, makes an important distinction between the analogous concepts of ‘instrument’ (*instrumento*) and ‘tool’

<sup>18</sup> “Es de advertir que personas que tienen algunas fealdades o faltas notables, como son corcovas y otras monstruosidades o naturales o por accidente, como son de golpes y semejantes, no son para esta Compañía, así porque estas cosas son inconvenientes para el sacerdocio como porque no ayudan para la edificación de los próximos, con quienes es menester conversar según nuestro instituto.” The passage continues: “si no fuese, como arriba se dixo, quando hubiese algunas singulares virtudes y dones de Dios, con los cuales semejantes faltas corporales se pensase acrecentarían más en la edificación que disminuirían.” *Cons.*, 186. Ironically, and as I noted at the opening of this study, Ignatius himself suffered from a deformity after his knee was improperly set.

<sup>19</sup> Restrepo, “Conversación,” 474–5.

<sup>20</sup> *Cons.*, 414; 814.

<sup>21</sup> *Ep.*, 4:627.

(*herramienta*).<sup>22</sup> The tool, he proposes, can be construed as a “prolongación de la mano” for the purposes of a physical labor consisting, primarily, of a manipulation of matter. The possibility of distinguishing between this tool and the instrument, he writes, resides in the instrument’s associations with the word: the labor in which it is implicated is mediated by discourse.<sup>23</sup> Legavre does not substantiate this claim by reference to a specific passage. We can see, however, that it is consistent with an aspect of the instrument that instruction, *doctrina*, and conversation illuminate through their triple articulation: the instrument is possessed of a basic interlocutionary thrust, operating as it does by addressing itself to others through discourse. The instrument’s fundamental relation to the word, however, is as crucial as the term that serves to define the scope of this opening. The ideal of a conversation *con todos* makes explicit the *totalizing* aspirations of the interlocutionary thrust. What we have here is instruction’s complicity with a radical eclosion of any kind of boundary that might restrict its impact, an eclosion anticipated in the theorem that holds the salvation of the *próximos* to be as urgent as one’s own salvation.

The reasons Ignatius gives for objecting to Mirón’s decision to decline the king’s appointment are also suggestive of a further dimension of the *todos*, beyond the desire to engage with people from all social strata: Ignatius reminds Mirón that a close relationship with as influential a political figure as John III could further projects like the Society’s mission to Ethiopia. This was a venture that sought, in its own way, to extend the Society’s conversation, in this case by addressing itself to people of different faiths. The ideal of a conversation *con todos* excluded no people, and as the example of a mission to Ethiopia shows, no part of the world, either. As anticipated in the *Exercises*, in the fragment from the Meditation on Two Standards that speaks of the way in which Christ sends his disciples *por todo el mundo*, the instrument’s constitutive relation to the field of the word would result in the emergence of the entire world as its theater of operations. Nadal made this clear when he declared of himself and of other Jesuits: “The world is our house.”<sup>24</sup> One is also reminded

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Legavre, “Instrumento,” in *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, vol. 2 (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 2007), 1040.

<sup>23</sup> The instrument, he writes, “se convierte en un término decisivo para describir el ideal jesuítico de una unión con Dios,” the purpose of which is to “posibilitar a Cristo continuar con su misión en el mundo a través del cuerpo de la Compañía.” Ibid., 1042.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 68. Commenting on Nadal’s assertion, O’Malley writes that while Nadal “referred this statement to the geographical scope of the Jesuit’s

here of another famous passage in the *Exercises*, found in the second preamble to the contemplation of the Incarnation. The exercitant, we read, should visualize “the great capacity and the roundness of the world, where many diverse peoples can be found [*la grande capacidad y redondez del mundo, en la qual están tantas y tan diversas gentes*].”<sup>25</sup> The passage is later echoed in the *Constitutions*, which speak of the possibility of finding the Society’s members “in diverse regions of the world [*en diversas partes del mundo*].”<sup>26</sup>

O’Malley writes that in contrast to their monastic and mendicant counterparts “Jesuits followed more closely the lifestyle of the early preachers of the Gospel.”<sup>27</sup> Elaborating on the implications of this “lifestyle” within the broader context of religious history, Philip Sheldrake has argued that the “closed and protected utopian vision of monastic enclosure in other spiritual traditions is broken open in the Jesuit *Constitutions*.”<sup>28</sup> We will have an opportunity to revisit this sweeping assertion. For the moment, however, I want to focus on the intuition that animates it and on what it has to say about the implications of the project of instruction. In support of it, one might mention M. B. Pranger’s inclusion of Ignatius within a list of figures whose works are implicated in a long “*cérémonie des adieux*” to medieval monasticism and to the philosophy of *contemptus mundi*.<sup>29</sup> The Society’s departure from a tradition that linked salvation with the spiritual progress that individuals could hope to make in ascetic seclusion can be traced in the growing prominence of the category of the *próximo* and in the concomitant awareness of the wide range of situations in which the instrument can intervene—the activities to which a Jesuit might hope to devote himself thus included the ministries of preaching, lectures, conversations, retreats, confession, casuistry, communion, works in hospitals, prisons, ministry to prostitutes and, last but not least, a systematic and

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ministry,” in the end the statement had a resonance that “went beyond the immediate context of his words.” Aside from Nadal’s own theology of nature and grace, O’Malley mentions, in this context, “the systemic relationship of the Jesuits to the *studia humanitatis* through their schools” and the *Contemplatio ad amorem* (68).

<sup>25</sup> *Exx.*, 103.

<sup>26</sup> *Cons.*, 655.

<sup>27</sup> O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 67–8.

<sup>28</sup> Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 118. Sheldrake goes on to consider, as part of this opening, “the availability of the spirituality of the *Exercises* to all manner and condition of women and men in their everyday places.”

<sup>29</sup> Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity*, 191–294.

enduring commitment to education.<sup>30</sup> Where Sheldrake speaks of an eclosion of the boundaries that had formerly confined the pursuit of spiritual perfection within a distinctly defined interior, however, Pranger speaks of a weakening of a strong but highly artificial structure.<sup>31</sup> The implications of this shift are evident, of course, not only in a program of action, but in the very terms in which the drama of salvation is conceived. The closed and protected enclosure where salvation was formerly played out is replaced, as Sheldrake notes, by the more expansive stage constituted by the *oikumene*, the whole of the inhabited world.<sup>32</sup>

This transition cannot be understood outside of the process that led to the establishment of a new geopolitical order and to what is often construed as a strategic synergy between the aims of the emerging modern empires, Portugal and Spain in particular, and those of Catholicism. Even if the project of spreading sacred doctrine *por todos estados y condiciones de personas* profited from its political moment, however, religion was more than the “maiden” of these empires, to echo the famous phrase Antonio de Nebrija used to refer to language in the Spanish case.<sup>33</sup> In terms of the metaphor of the instrument, such a vision of religion would mean that the hand to whose grips it surrenders could be that of any of those monarchs with whom at one point or another Ignatius and his successors sought to forge an alliance. The picture is in truth much more complicated. Imperial expansion, as we know, was articulated around two distinct modes of conquest, military and spiritual. Military conquest involved the subjugation of peoples by forceful means, while spiritual conquest was centered not only, as its name indicates, on the imposition of a set of religious beliefs, but also on the implementation of the ideal of civility with roots in classical culture.<sup>34</sup> The Christian expectation that the

<sup>30</sup> The activities I mention follow O’Malley’s index in *The First Jesuits*.

<sup>31</sup> Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity*, 17–38.

<sup>32</sup> Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred*, 118.

<sup>33</sup> Antonio de Nebrija, *Gramática de la lengua castellana*, eds. Miguel Angel Esparza and Ramón Sarmiento (Madrid: Fundación Antonio de Nebrija, 1992). Clossey makes a similar claim when he writes that “the early-modern state’s use of religion went far beyond the desire to establish a strict social control over its subjects and to consolidate its territory,” which is how the ‘instrumentalization’ of religion is commonly understood. He writes this in the course of a critical assessment of the historiography of the formation of confessional identities and of conceptions of confessionalization as a form of political consolidation. Clossey cites the funding of distant missions by figures like the Catholic Kings. It is not clear, he writes, what advantage could be derived “from diverting resources to the end of the earth.” Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 254.

<sup>34</sup> See John M. Headley, “Geography and Empire in the Late Renaissance: Botero’s Assignment, Western Universalism, and the Civilizing Process,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 53,

Gospel must be preached to all nations and the classical notion of *humanitas* are both oriented towards the universal, and it was because of this shared orientation that they could supply each other with a mirror that reflected and legitimized their respective aspirations. The case of modern geography, a discipline that originates in the same humanist milieu in which the ideal of civility became a central concern, proves instructive in this respect. As John Headley has shown, the first cartographical depictions of the *oikumene* sought to represent the full scope of the universalizing aspirations by reference to which geography itself, as an example of *humanitas*, demands to be understood.<sup>35</sup> And though in the end it was the progress of imperial expansion that actualized the kind of domination that was symbolically staged in these representations, religion was never simply an instrument, as it was the command to preach the Gospel to all nations that, in the final analysis, was regarded as the most compelling articulation of the aspiration to universality.<sup>36</sup>

Though mindful of the *Constitutions'* debt to the genealogy of instrumentality that I traced above, Buckley refrains from emphasizing the instrument's sacramental dimension. Instead, Aquinas' sacramental theology becomes the object of attention because it is there that one can find a comprehensive definition of the instrument. Already in Polanco's *Industrias*, however, the Jesuit instrument is said to be meant to make it possible for God "to bestow upon or increase his grace in others." This sacramental inflection is then made explicit in the *Constitutions*, and not only when they speak of the instrument's relation to the divine hand: what they have to say about the divine "institution" of the Society echoes, also, a central concern of Aquinas' theology.<sup>37</sup> It is true that Buckley's allusions to Aquinas' "metaphysics of instrumentality" are in the service of a broader attempt to understand the relation between the Society and the humanist curriculum. His discussion of this metaphysics focuses, for this purpose, on the hypostatic union, an instance of instrumentality that provides at once a conception of the relation between the divine and the human and a definition of the human that sheds important light on the Society's humanist commitments. Even if Buckley's focus lies

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no. 4 (2000): 1119–1155. This claim is developed further in his *The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>35</sup> Headley, "Geography and Empire in the Late Renaissance," 1130.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1121.

<sup>37</sup> ST, III, q. 64, art. 2.

elsewhere, though, he does articulate an understanding of Ignatius' relation to the "metaphysics of instrumentality" that explains, in its own way, the omission of a sacramental reference: Ignatius, we read, follows a "general theology" of instrumentality that sacrifices the "precision" of its development in the *Summa* for the sake of a "suggestive" metaphor.<sup>38</sup> It is true that the technical distinctions that Aquinas is at pains to establish are not at the foreground of Ignatius' treatment, but it is also true that the sacramental understanding of the instrument is one of the "general" presuppositions of the rhetoric of instrumentality. The metaphor need not divest itself of its specifically sacramental inflection to emerge in all its suggestiveness.<sup>39</sup>

Why is it necessary to insist on this sacramental, and essentially salvific, inflection? The Society's openness towards the world—understood first and foremost as the sphere of interlocution—owes much, as I pointed previously, to its relation to certain humanist ideals. The opening is in fact itself anticipated, in a sense, by the very genesis of humanism, which has itself often been characterized in terms of an opening of the monastic enclosure similar to the one with which Sheldrake credits the Society. Humanist ideals, however, cannot by themselves account for a process whose stakes are found, as Sheldrake correctly notes, in the emergence of the concept of the world in its salvific significance. Clossey's remarks about the obvious "affinities" between the ideals present in the Society's conception of its own task and the Renaissance revival of Stoic cosmopolitanism are worth pondering here. The notion that the Society is to engage with everyone evokes Stoicism's belief in a "universal community of equals," along with its distaste for the different barriers (national, racial, linguistic, and religious) that could restrain what Francisco de Vitoria regarded as "the right to unhindered *communicatio*," a right grounded in a concept of natural law shaped by Stoicism that would in turn provide the foundation for Suárez's *ius gentium*.<sup>40</sup> Clossey rightly notes, however, that this cosmopolitanism went hand in hand with a belief in a syncretism that, considering all religions to express the same truths, "took the edge off the soteriological drive."<sup>41</sup> The Society's "cosmopolitanism," by contrast,

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<sup>38</sup> Buckley, *The Catholic University as Promise and Project*, 86.

<sup>39</sup> Lonergan, too, recognizes this "suggestive" element when he remarks on the "objective obscurity" and the "element of myth" that subsists in the metaphor of the instrument in *Grace and Freedom*, 82.

<sup>40</sup> Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 253–4.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 253.

was possessed of a soteriological orientation that, while clearly benefitting from the revival of classical culture, cannot be understood exclusively in classical terms. Even if the aims of this classically inspired cosmopolitanism and those of Christianity intersected, the most compelling articulation of the pursuit of universality, as noted above, was the one put forth by the apostolic imperative and by its distinctly salvific aims.

The departure from the monastic silence and solitude signaled by the concept of conversation, although it implies an opening onto the so-called ‘secular’ sphere, does not have to amount to a neutralization, let alone a ‘secularization,’ in the understanding of the word that is now current, of a soteriological intention. To the contrary, this intention persists in what is communicated in this conversation, that sacred doctrine that contains within itself the promise of salvation. It is here that the need for a sacramental reference in discussions of the instrument makes itself felt with great force. The instrument is, once again, concerned with the salvation of others. The world, the theater of operations most suited to its commitment to instruction, is in turn nothing but that realm in which the *próximo*, as the addressee of a salvific message, is to be found. In speaking of a sacramental instrument, the soteriological dimension of instruction and of the world that it brings into being is fittingly marked. Clossey makes a compelling case for the centrality of “the soteriological drive” as regards not only the Society, but the whole of early modern Catholicism. He writes that the emphasis on this drive shows that there can be a “unifying heart” to Catholicism other than the question of the Church’s institutional integrity, in a way that makes it possible to move away from influential but ultimately misleading historiographical constructs like that of the “Counter-Reformation.”<sup>42</sup> Underscoring the soteriological inflection of the Society’s *conversación con todos* might be a way of ascertaining the group’s place within early modern Catholicism, but ultimately what interests me is the relation that Clossey establishes between Catholicism’s salvific core and its global scope, on the one hand, and his claim that the “intensely salvific” and the “extensively global” are directly proportional, on the other.<sup>43</sup> The opening to the world does not have to amount to a neutralization of a soteriological intention, and not only because the salvation of the world is its fundamental purpose. By specifying that the instrument is a sacramental instrument, one

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 245–8.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 256.

underscores its salvific aims and the salvific meaning of that opening onto others that condenses much of what is meant, in this context, by the ‘world.’ However, the fact that the salvation of others is the fundamental purpose of that opening can only mean that the soteriological element is actually *constitutive* of the world. The sacramental reference is implicated, in this sense, not only in marking the soteriological significance of the world in which the instrument acts, but also in the postulation of this world and, ultimately, of the Society’s relation to it.



## CHAPTER NINE

### WORLD

At its most fundamental, the ‘world’ mentioned in the *Constitutions* designates the horizon of interlocution of the Society’s *conversación*. As I noted above, I am interested not simply in the Society’s relation to this world, but in the Society’s relation to this world as determined by the understanding of the instrument that emerges from the genealogy I traced above.

In the case of the Society’s mission, it is the task of instruction and the soteriological overtones of the sacramental understanding of the instrument that are worth emphasizing. When it comes to the Society’s relation to the world, however, it is the event that inaugurates the historical situation in which the sacramental instrument operates—Christ’s withdrawal from the world in bodily presence in the Ascension—that proves central. As I hope to show, the Society’s relation to the world expresses a specific understanding of this event and of its implications. This understanding, I argue, is experiential in nature. It takes shape in the course of a series of experiences that form part of the historical record of the Society, and it is reflected in that record.

Reflecting on the Ascension, Aquinas wonders whether, in light of the fact that Christ’s aim was to save humanity, it would not have been more beneficial “if he had lingered among us upon earth.”<sup>1</sup> Aquinas’ argument for the Ascension’s “fittingness” (*convenientia*) begins with the claim that “the place ought to be in keeping with what is contained therein” and that an essentially “corruptible” world is not suited to the “incorruptible” life upon which Christ entered as a result of the resurrection.<sup>2</sup> Echoing Augustine’s

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<sup>1</sup> The question seems all the more reasonable in light of Christ’s *delayed* ascension: “Christ’s body was in no way changed after the Resurrection. But He did not ascend into heaven immediately after rising again, for He said after the Resurrection (Damascene 20:17): ‘I am not yet ascended to My Father.’ Therefore it seems that neither should He have ascended after forty days.” *ST*, III, q. 57, art. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. “By ascending into heaven,” Aquinas writes, “Christ acquired no addition to His essential glory either in body or in soul: nevertheless He did acquire something as to the fittingness of place, which pertains to the well-being of glory.” *ST*, III, q. 57, art. 1, ad. 2.

own intervention into this debate, Aquinas suggests that by withdrawing from the world in bodily presence Christ is able to be present to believers in a way that is more conducive to the cultivation of faith, hope, and charity. The Ascension, however, has other benefits, too. In particular, it installs Christ in the lofty position from which he might, in the words of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, "fill all things [*plérósé ta panta*]" (Eph 4:10). Deriving its power, as I showed above, from the one whose withdrawal in bodily presence is now shown to be "fitting," the instrument bears witness not only to this fittingness, but also to the possibility that the one who ceases to be bodily present can be present in every single thing.

The first of the colloquies that bring the Meditation on Two Standards to a close states that those who are admitted as Christ's apostles must be willing to imitate him.<sup>3</sup> The vow that Ignatius and his first companions made in Montmartre stipulated that they would travel to Jerusalem, in such a way as to suggest that this imitation required them to be where Christ once was. In Pierre Blet's view, the group never intended to remain there for good. Instead, Ignatius and his companions meant to spend some time following in Christ's footsteps in the Holy Land, before placing themselves at the Pope's disposal.<sup>4</sup> In support of this Blet refers to a statement by Pierre Favre, who indicated that Ignatius and his companions planned to go to the Pope "upon returning from Jerusalem." Diego Laínez' evocation of this moment presents a more complicated picture: the first Jesuits' plan, he writes, was to place themselves at the Pope's disposal if they couldn't get there within a year.<sup>5</sup>

In his discussion of the place that the project of journeying to the Holy Land occupied in the minds of the first Jesuits, Leturia writes that the "orientación palestinense" of Ignatius' plans was operative from the moment of his conversion and that it would remain in effect in his mind and in those of his followers. Echoing the main themes of the *Exercises'* Meditation on Two Standards, he comments that Ignatius's soul "gravitó preferentemente... hacia aquella región de Hierusalén en que se había revelado el sumo Capitán de todos los buenos repartiendo por el mundo a sus apóstoles y amigos a la conquista del orbe."<sup>6</sup> Leturia himself indicates, though,

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<sup>3</sup> Exx., 147.

<sup>4</sup> Blet, "Note sur les origines," 104.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Leturia, "Jerusalén y Roma en los designios de San Ignacio," 195.

that Ignatius and his companions were initially less intent on scattering across the planet and conquering it. Their wish was to remain in Palestine, as close as possible to where the revelation of the “sumo Capitán” had taken place, and to spend their time visiting the holy places and ministering to the locals. In support of this view, he quotes Polanco’s account of the vow in Montmartre. Ignatius and his companions, he writes, decided to go to Jerusalem. They were not to make any decisions regarding their future until they arrived there, “not knowing what God wanted from them, whether to return [to Rome] or to remain there,” although as he himself would note, “it was to the latter that they felt most inclined.”<sup>7</sup>

Blet’s account presupposes a continuity between imitation and apostleship, one that is line with what is stated in the Meditation on Two Standards. The first Jesuits, he suggests, wished to imitate Christ so as to constitute themselves as his representatives, in a way that would authorize them to disseminate a message which—as contemporary understandings of the Gospel had it—was fundamentally no different from the living example of Christ. At the same time, his claim that the first Jesuits sought first to follow in Christ’s footsteps before devoting themselves to the Pope’s service implies that it might be possible, in the end, to distinguish between imitation and apostleship. This is not so different from the distinction that Leturia makes when he points out that only when the group’s efforts to secure a passage to Jerusalem proved unsuccessful, and imitation became an impossibility, did the group embrace the apostolic ideal. Of course, to say that imitation became an impossibility, one must be prepared to accept that the particular habitat of what is being imitated was considered to be essential. The Jesuits seem to have believed this. It explains why they so earnestly desired to be in Jerusalem.

Clearly the loss of Jerusalem could not have been felt in a similar way by all of those affected by it. What Ignatius’ companions lost was the prospect of seeing the holy places for the first time. Their loss concerned a hope, the possibility of encountering something of which they were never in possession. Not so for Ignatius, who had in fact been there once. The failed passage to the Holy Land was for him a more dramatic loss, a real exile from a place he had been to and had not merely imagined, but seen with his own eyes.<sup>8</sup> This serves to distinguish him from the rest, in a way

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>8</sup> The loss of Jerusalem, despite its having been a matter of the circumstances that the first Jesuits confronted, would also seem to stage a decisive break with the axial configuration that Christianity had inherited from the Middle Ages, and which posited the Holy

that correlates with his foundational status. At the same time, it calls attention to his experience in Jerusalem and to what, according to the account consigned in the *Acta*, might very well be its nucleus. I am referring to Ignatius' visit, on the eve of his departure from the Holy Land, to the rock of the Ascension.

Ignatius told Gonçalves da Câmara that upon first catching sight of Jerusalem he experienced great consolation. The feeling recurred on his visit to the holy places, galvanizing his original wish: "His firm intention," we read, "was to remain in Jerusalem, forever visiting those holy places."<sup>9</sup> Ignatius communicated this intention to the Guardian of the Franciscans, who at that time were in charge of the holy places. The Guardian tried to dissuade him, arguing that they would not be able to provide for him in their house. When Ignatius insisted, claiming that he would only need the Franciscans to hear his confession from time to time, the Guardian agreed to discuss the matter with the Provincial as soon as the latter came back from Bethlehem. The Provincial arrived the day before Ignatius was set to leave. He was not happy with Ignatius' request. Devout Christians like him, the Provincial told Ignatius, risked being kidnapped by the Turks. Ignatius remained defiant, however, and did not relent until the Provincial threatened to exercise his power to excommunicate pilgrims who refused to follow his orders.<sup>10</sup>

On his way back to the monastery, Ignatius decided to take a detour. As the *Acta* notes, he was suddenly overcome by "a great desire to visit the Mount of Olives one more time before he left, now that it was not Our Lord's will that he should remain in those holy places."<sup>11</sup> Of all the places of which he could have had a final glimpse, he chose the rock from which Christ ascended to heaven. The passage that records this visit is among the most perplexing in the whole book:

On the Mount of Olives there is a stone, from which Our Lord went up into heaven, and even now the footprints can be seen; this is what he wanted to go back to see. Thus, without saying a thing or taking a guide—because those who move about without a Turk to guide them are in great danger—he slipped away from the others and went off, all on his own, to the Mount of

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Sepulcher as the center of the cosmos. Leturia remarks that this arrangement had been destabilized by the discovery of the New World. Nevertheless, that seems not to have been enough to instantaneously topple this configuration: the Jesuits' very desire to visit Jerusalem may in fact offer a token of its persistence. Cf. *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>9</sup> *Acta*, 45.

<sup>10</sup> *Acta*, 45–6.

<sup>11</sup> *Acta*, 47.

Olives. The sentries didn't want to let him in; he gave them a knife from the writing implements he was carrying. And after he had made his prayer with considerable consolation, the desire came to him to go to Bethpage. And while he was there, he suddenly remembered that in the Mount of Olives he hadn't taken a proper look at where the right foot or the left foot were. And on returning there, I think he gave his scissors to the sentries so that they would let him in.<sup>12</sup>

Compared to the illumination at the banks of the river Cardoner and to the vision in La Storta, two events that most readings of the *Acta* single out as the most decisive of the experiences recorded in its pages, Ignatius' visit to the rock of the Ascension has received scant attention. This has to do not only with the extraordinary nature of the former two. The events in Cardoner and in La Storta, after all, can be related, respectively, to such decisive developments as the progress of the *Exercises* and the eventual consolidation of the Society's presence in Rome. By contrast, the significance of the visit to the rock remains difficult to determine. Marjorie O'Rourke-Boyle is of the opinion that it underscores the "vestigial topic," a fairly common figure for the practice of *imitatio* as "the placement of one's footsteps firmly in those of another."<sup>13</sup> Though this topic serves to portray Ignatius as an imitator of Christ, his return to the rock stands for an excessive "literalization" of what is ultimately a figure. Motivated, furthermore, by an excessively "physical" relation to the footprints—as seen in Ignatius' peculiar concern with their placement—this literalization can only drain the topic of its spiritual significance. Comparable instances of such a despiritualization were denounced, among others, by Jerome and Erasmus, and because Ignatius, as O'Rourke-Boyle argues, was well aware of these views, the passage must be intended to portray him as lacking "the interior disposition" demanded by a more spiritual understanding of imitation. For this reason, it deserves a place among those passages in the *Acta* that seek to cast Ignatius as an impetuous initiate, not yet at that

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<sup>12</sup> "En el monte Olivete está una piedra, de la cual subió nuestro Señor a los cielos, y se ven aún agora las pisadas impresas; y esto era lo que él quería tornar a ver. Y así, sin decir ninguna cosa ni tomar guía (porque los que van sin turco por guía corren gran peligro), se descabulló de los otros, y se fue solo al monte Olivete. Y no lo querían dejar entrar las guardas. Les dio un cuchillo de las esribanías que llevaba; y después de haber hecho su oración con harta consolación, le vino deseo de ir a Betfage; y estando allá, se tornó a acordar que no había bien mirado en el monte Olivete a qué parte estaba el pie derecho, o a qué parte el esquierdo; y tornando allá, creo que dio las tijeras a las guardas para que le dejases entrar." *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Loyola's Acts: The Rhetoric of the Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 165.

stage in which the spiritual predominates over everything else, beginning of course with the literal.<sup>14</sup>

O'Rourke-Boyle's assumption that Ignatius encounters the same thing each time he returns to the rock, and that the only difference lies in the quality of the encounter, more removed from the spiritual with each return, deserves of course to be problematized. For if the first visit is animated by a wish to simply see the footprints one last time, the second is motivated by a failure to remember with precision their position with respect to one another. This serves as an indication that the footprints are not simply parallel to one another, a fact that opens up a number of allegorical possibilities. One of them concerns the motif of the two feet of the soul. Aristotelian in origin, it was popularized by Bonaventura, making its way from his sermons to the opening of Dante's *Inferno*. Freccero has called attention to this motif in his gloss on Dante's *sì che 'l piè fermo sempre era 'l più basso*, pointing out that it was a fairly conventional way of representing the relation between the intellectual and the appetitive faculties: with one foot impaired by ignorance and the other by concupiscence, he explains, man emerges as a limping creature (*homo claudus*).<sup>15</sup> The insistence on a difference in the relative position of the footprints could allude to the kind of limp that was often attributed to the left foot, dragged down by human appetites. But in that case it would not be of a literalization of a spiritual topic that we must speak in connection to Ignatius' account of his visit to the rock of the Ascension. The surface of the rock would instead act like a mirror, returning to the one who longs to see a trace of Christ an image of his own fallenness.<sup>16</sup>

Christ's footprints precede the instant in which he bids farewell to the Holy Land, which is precisely what Ignatius was about to do when he returned to the Mount of Olives. The surface of the rock also functions as a mirror in this regard. Except that in the case of Christ, what he is about to leave behind when those footprints engrave themselves on the rock is not simply Jerusalem, but the world itself. Ignatius' recalcitrance, the stubbornness with which he defies the Prior and the Provincial, is understandable if one takes into account this disjunction: after Christ

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>15</sup> John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 29–54.

<sup>16</sup> This allegory of human fallenness seems particularly pertinent in light of Ignatius' own limp, a result of the wound he suffered in Pamplona.

leaves Jerusalem not so as to be somewhere else in the world, the Holy Land is the one place where one might feel in his proximity. This is the central presupposition of the kind of pilgrimage that brought Ignatius to Jerusalem in the first place.<sup>17</sup> Christ's footprints present a mirror image of the imminence of Ignatius' own absence, but this image can only accentuate the fact that the world and those who inhabit it have been left behind by God.

Might this explain the melancholy air that pervades the entire episode? The sense of abandonment that results from Christ's absence is not articulated explicitly. Desolation insinuates itself as a mood. And as it insinuates itself in this way, the *Acta* comes to be linked, silently but decisively, to the theological reflection on the "fittingness" (*convenientia*) of Christ's withdrawal from the world that I discussed at the beginning of this chapter. This fittingness was proclaimed by Christ himself when, on the eve of his Passion, he declared the arrival of the Holy Spirit to be contingent on his withdrawal: "It is convenient for you that I go away," Christ told his disciples, "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). For Augustine, these words were meant to disclose the difference between two kinds of consolation: the one afforded by Christ's bodily presence and the one afforded by the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Christ's bodily presence, Augustine writes, must have had a comforting effect on whoever found himself in his proximity, and this means that it was enough for him to allude to his departure to throw his listeners into despair: the disciples, "not yet seeing internally the spiritual comfort that they were going to possess through the Holy Spirit, were afraid of losing that which they saw externally in Christ." They were therefore "saddened" by Christ's words, sensing as they did that "their fleshly vision was being left empty." They had yet to understand, Augustine goes on to say, that this emptiness was necessary for the Holy Spirit to descend and to comfort them, and in so doing to inaugurate a new form of consolation: as the Scriptures themselves testify, on Pentecost the third person of the Trinity proceeded to comfort the disciples not, as had been done until then, by "thrusting a human body before the bodies of those

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. John Olin, "The Idea of Pilgrimage in the Experience of Ignatius Loyola," *Church History*, 48, no. 4 (1979), 387–97.

who were looking," but by "infusing himself into the hearts of those who were believing."<sup>18</sup>

Augustine's position is exemplary in that it views the passage from one form of consolation to the other in terms of a narrative of fulfillment. A knowledge "according to the flesh" (or *kata sarka*, in Paul's formulation) was not simply replaced by belief; in being replaced in this way, it was revealed as deficient. The orthodox interpretation of the Ascension would adopt this position. As Leo the Great would write shortly after Augustine, Christ's disappearance perfected human faith: "For it is the strength of great minds and the light of firmly-faithful souls unhesitatingly to believe what is not seen with the bodily sight, and to fix one's affections where you cannot direct your gaze."<sup>19</sup> This did not prevent some writers, however, from exploring the gap, however minimal, that separates the two forms of consolation, the brief interval of desolation between the two. Monastic literature, in the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux, provides us with an eloquent example of this kind of exploration. Bernard, too, interprets the Ascension as a moment of absolute fulfillment, but his treatment is not devoid of a sense of the "remoteness" and the "unapproachability" of Christ.<sup>20</sup> The episode of the *Acta* concerning Ignatius' visit to the rock of the Ascension could certainly be read in conjunction with Bernard's sermons on the Ascension, and perhaps even emerge as an important site in which to trace the Society's own relation to monastic culture, a topic I will address later on.

In the end, Ignatius obeys the orders of the Provincial. Taking into account, once again, the possibility of regarding his departure from the Holy Land as an image of Christ's own departure, one could argue that in departing Ignatius symbolically gives his assent to the orthodox construction of Christ's departure as a necessary and ineluctable fulfillment—in leaving Jerusalem, in other words, Ignatius affirms the need to let Christ

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<sup>18</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, ed. John W. Retting (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 183.

<sup>19</sup> Leo the Great. "Sermon LXXIV," in *The Letters and Sermons of Leo the Great*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Charles Lett Feltoe (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886), 188.

<sup>20</sup> This is how M. B. Pranger characterizes Bernard's position on the Ascension in his analysis of Bernard's uses of *figura*. Cf. "The *Persona* of the Preacher in Bernard of Clairvaux," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 51 (2007), 38. Pranger is taking up a point already developed in *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 315–335.

go, and in fact lets Christ go himself. The melancholy that pervades the episode is enough indication that he remains ambivalent about this, but in the end he would seem to accept what Leo wrote: the “fittingness” of the transformation of “what until then was visible” into “a sacramental presence.”<sup>21</sup>

I quote Leo’s words because they disclose a dimension of the narrative of Ignatius’ visit to the rock of the Ascension that resonates with what I have been discussing in this part of this study. The episode, I would like to propose, has a clear *sacramental* significance. This is already clear in the reference to the footprints themselves. Footprints are, indeed, the example of choice of those wishing to illustrate the nature of the “sign” of which sacraments, following Augustine’s definition, are an example. The catechetical definition of sacraments, itself grounded on Augustine’s dictum that a sign, “besides what it presents to the senses,” functions also as “a medium through which we arrive at the knowledge of something else,” is exemplary in this regard.<sup>22</sup> The Roman Catechism states that, just as “from a footprint that we see traced on the ground we instantly infer that someone whose trace appears has passed,” so too should the “visible sign” of a sacrament allow one to infer the workings of the “invisible grace” that constitutes its proper power.<sup>23</sup> The privilege accorded to Augustine’s definition (“there is none more comprehensive,” the Roman Catechism claims, “none more perspicuous”) was often justified in this specific instance by the fact that it was “adopted by all scholastic writers.” The matter, however, is more complex: Aquinas, as we saw, grounded signification on the sacrament’s instrumentality; for him, the sacrament is a sign precisely because it is an instrument, a secondary cause that, by virtue of its very secondariness, allows one to *infer*, just like a sign does, the effective presence of a primary cause.

The text of the *Acta* underscores Ignatius’ interest in the footprints’ position. In showing the imprint of a left foot and a right foot, each in a different place, the surface of the rock comes to evoke a *step*—if, echoing the Roman Catechism once more, a footprint allows us to infer someone’s *passage*, two footsteps whose positions differ with respect to one another can only make this passage more certain. This passage, as we know, concerns Christ’s withdrawal from the earth in bodily presence.

<sup>21</sup> Leo the Great, “Sermon LXXIV,” 188.

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, II.1.

<sup>23</sup> *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini ad parochos*, II.1.3.

The traces on the surface of the rock, that is, do not evoke a step taken by a being in the process of switching locations—and hence to be found elsewhere in the world—as much as this being's passage beyond this world. One thing that distinguishes this step beyond, however, is the impossibility, for the one seeking to place his footsteps firmly in those of another—according to a certain understanding of the vestigial topic—of stepping into the beyond where Christ steps: Christ bequeaths a trace of his disappearance, but this trace contains an interdiction—for the one who is here, the elsewhere into which he steps is an impossibility. The experience of pilgrimage, the *Acta* suggests, is consummated with the encounter with a vanishing point that, for anything other than what vanished, remains foreclosed.

The sacramental significance of Ignatius' visit to the rock of the Ascension is not exhausted, however, by the footprints' capacity to serve as an allegory of the sign. The footprints must be regarded, too, in relation to the step to which they attest. At stake in this step is the very withdrawal that, in the genealogy of the instrument that I traced above, provides the justification for the institutional mediation of salvation. The surface of the rock confronts Ignatius with the discontinuity at the origin of the historical situation that demands a ministerial application of the universal cause of salvation. It is the site in which the historical situation with a view to which Christ instituted the sacramental instrument—the historical situation characterized by his absence or by his “sacramental presence”—is officially inaugurated.

I have been suggesting that Christ's withdrawal exceeds a simple change of location, and that the footprints that Ignatius is so interested in remembering accurately evoke a step whereby an entity ceased to be somewhere not in order to be elsewhere, at least not in an elsewhere that is ultimately here. This means that the surface of the rock, aside from serving as a record of the inauguration of a specific historical situation, is also implicated in a basic distinction between heaven and earth. These two aspects might in the end constitute the two facets of one same assertion, according to which the institution of a sacramental instrumentality and the inception of an institutional mediation of salvation are the expression of a distinction between the other world and this world and the form taken by an affirmation of this world. I noted above that the sacramental instrument evokes the disappearance presupposed by its very deployment. With regard to the Jesuit instrument, this evocation

would seem to take the form of that orientation towards “all things” (*ta panta*) that is the corollary of the Ascension, and that lives on in Ignatius’ admonition to find God “in all things.” The Jesuit instrument shares this totalizing ambition, determined as it is, in principle at least, to engage with the totality of the particulars comprised within the world. This, of course, is premised upon a loving affirmation of this world, an *amor mundi* conscious, as I will now show, of the distance that separates it from the tradition of *contemptus mundi*.



### PART THREE

#### THE DAMAGED INSTRUMENT: IGNATIUS' CRITIQUE OF ASCETIC IDEALS



## CHAPTER TEN

### THE ASCETIC DRIVE

Early in 1545, Ignatius received troubling news concerning the Society's outpost in Coimbra, a city in central Portugal that was the seat of the kingdom's oldest university. The reports that made their way to Rome made it seem as though the students in the Jesuit college, recently endowed by King John III, were attracting unwanted attention with their behavior. Processions in which young Jesuits flagellated themselves in front of the public and strenuous meditation sessions undertaken in the presence of skulls, presumably intended to assist one in pondering the reality of death, were among the incidents reported.<sup>1</sup> These, however, were only the more extreme examples, and not what worried Ignatius the most. More alarming to him was the news that a large number of the scholastics—as the students at the college were called—had been engaging, with what appeared to be an excessive zeal, in a host of ascetic practices. These included, aside from fasts and vigils, various forms of corporeal penance.

The scholastics in Coimbra lived under the direction of Simão Rodrigues, a member of the Portuguese lower nobility who had been one of Ignatius' first companions in Paris. Ignatius had a special affection for Rodrigues, so he was bound to be disturbed not only by the behavior detailed in the reports, but also by the suggestion that the scholastics had Rodrigues' approval. Not surprisingly, it was not until after much hesitation that he asked Rodrigues to come to Rome to discuss the situation. Rodrigues ignored Ignatius' request, managing to postpone a confrontation for two years. Further reports followed, however, forcing Ignatius to address the scholastics directly. Dispatched on 7 May 1547, Ignatius' letter to Coimbra is the first document in the dossier of what in Jesuit historiography is known as the Portuguese crisis. The word 'crisis' seems justified: five years

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<sup>1</sup> Munitiz and Endean claim that the Jesuits' "bizarre" behavior was "inspired in the 'folly of the cross' and in a misinterpretation of the *Exercises*." *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, 390. O'Malley mentions these instances in *The First Jesuits*, 330. His source is García Villoslada, *Ignacio*, 650–2.

later, after many other letters and summons had been dispatched, the entire Portuguese province appeared to be on the brink of secession.<sup>2</sup>

Why did Ignatius object to the scholastics' austerities? My inquiry into the place of asceticism within the Society and into the Society's relation to monastic tradition, where ascetic pursuits played a central role, begins with this question. Later on there will be occasion to qualify this statement, but for the moment it seems accurate to say that Ignatius considered these pursuits to be at odds with the Society's charism. Instituted not simply for the salvation of oneself but also for that of others, the Society expected its members to transcend the concern with individual perfection that lies at the center of the ascetic life. This is not to say that asceticism had no place in the Society, only that the Society's conception of its own mission—its commitment to instruction, as discussed in the preceding part—made it necessary to subject asceticism to a tight regulation.

While monastic sources bear witness to what looks like a similar regulation, in the case of the Society, the anxieties that such a regulation seeks to placate, the terms in which it is formulated, and the results it aspires to bring about are unique. What makes them unique, as I hope to show in the chapters that follow, is their relation to the instrumental vision discussed in the preceding part: as far as the Society is concerned, the regulation of asceticism aims, specifically, to ensure that the instrument can fulfill its function, that it remains operative. It is this attention to the instrumental dimension of the question that constitutes my contribution to the discussion of asceticism's place in the Society, a topic that has been widely discussed. To be sure, the claim that Ignatius considered the ascetic ideal to be at odds with the Society's charism is by no means a novel claim. What has not been given the attention it deserves, however, is the role that the metaphor of the instrument plays in Ignatius' efforts to confront this question. My analysis seeks to remedy this state of affairs, ultimately so as to show that it is the metaphor of the instrument that provides Ignatius' critique of ascetic ideals with an internal coherence and with a means of linking this critique to the inquiry into providence on which Ignatius embarks in the *Exercises*, and on the basis

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<sup>2</sup> An outline of the crisis can be found in O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 329–33. For a more extended discussion, see José Carlos Monteiro Pacheco, *Simão Rodrigues: iniciador da Companhia de Jesus em Portugal* (Braga: Apostolado da Oração, 1987), 155–83; Francisco Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal*, vols. 1 and 2 (Oporto: Apostolado da Imprensa, 1931), 3–218; Ricardo García Villoslada, *San Ignacio de Loyola. Nueva biografía* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1986), 642–74.

of which he proceeds to articulate his understanding of the Society's mission in the *Constitutions*. Indeed, it will soon become apparent that the regulation of what from now on I would like call the 'ascetic drive' will present Ignatius with an opportunity to articulate this mission with even greater definition.<sup>3</sup> The fact that this regulation, as I just suggested, aims to ensure that the instrument can fulfill its function and that its operativity is not compromised can only offer further proof of the metaphor's relevance to the understanding of this mission, precisely what my analysis of the *Constitutions* sought to establish. The chapters that follow, however, also hope to show that, to the extent that one regards the ascetic drive as a defining feature of monastic culture, the metaphor that presides over its regulation can also be expected to emerge as a site in which to trace the Society's relation to its predecessors. Here, too, my contribution resides not so much in explicating this relation—something that scholars have already outlined in detail—as in showing that this relation, as it has already been elucidated, can be understood by reference to the metaphor of the instrument.

I have already quoted a statement that attempts to capture where the Society stands in relation to monastic culture. Sheldrake, as I wrote in the preceding part, refers to the Jesuit *Constitutions* as a text that "breaks open" the monastic "enclosure" and the "utopia" it stands for.<sup>4</sup> As I noted back then, this sweeping assertion needs to be qualified. The mendicant orders, after all, had been around for a few centuries by the time that Ignatius and his first companions arrived in Rome. Their combination of a strong

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<sup>3</sup> The expression 'ascetic drive' has a clear psychoanalytic ring, and this should serve as an indication of how I approach the question of asceticism in what follows. Not that I intend to subject Ignatius' discussion of asceticism to a psychoanalytic reading. My plan is to explore how Ignatius conceives of the Society's relation to monastic culture and how this conception shapes his definition of the Society's own culture. If I find it appropriate to speak of an 'ascetic drive,' it is in light, precisely, of the 'cultural' dimension that psychoanalysis assigns to drives, a reality whose scrutiny is fated to raise the question of the possibility of culture. On this point, see Sigmund Freud, "Instincts and their Vicissitudes," in *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 83–103.

<sup>4</sup> This observation recalls a pervasive way of characterizing the cultural shifts with which the early modern period is conventionally associated. Consider, in this context, Koyré's famous reference to the progress of science in the time that separates Nicholas of Cusa from Giordano Bruno as a passage from a "closed world" to an "infinite universe." Cf. Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957).

urban presence and their own commitment to preaching clearly anticipate important features of the Society, as does their members' emphasis on living not only for themselves, but for the service of others—according to their famous motto: *non sibi soli vivere sed et aliis proficere*.<sup>5</sup> The growing prominence of urban centers, which many allude to when trying to explain the emergence of these orders, is also reflected in another phenomenon: the appearance of cathedral schools. These precursors of the university played a role in the undoing the monastery's monopoly on learning—in that sense they, too, can be credited with the opening of the monastic world. Of course, in the end one might not even need to look elsewhere than at the history of the monastic orders themselves. The various calls for reform that punctuate the history of the Benedictine order, for example, are evidence of periodic relaxations of its discipline that are themselves an indication of the fact that the purportedly impermeable world of monasticism was open to and could be “contaminated” by other institutions.<sup>6</sup>

While these and other developments challenge an assertion as sweeping as the one Sheldrake makes, one must nevertheless be sure to do justice to the assertion's intent. The most elemental historiographical rigor might require one to ask for a more cautious assessment of the problem, but not if what is at stake is an inquiry focused, like Sheldrake's, on different cultural paradigms and into the ideals they express. A level of abstraction is in that case not only justified, but necessary. Sheldrake's claim is not that a closed world is broken open for the first time or that it is not broken

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<sup>5</sup> O'Malley devotes important pages to a discussion of Jerónimo Nadal's views on how the Society differed from its monastic predecessors and from the mendicants in particular. Jesuits were like the mendicants in that they, too, “invoked the *vita apostolica* as a warrant for their programs.” Nadal, O’Malley writes, “knew that in significant ways the mendicants of the Middle Ages were different from monks,” but he nonetheless “classified them and other orders as monastic insofar as they retained choir and monastic garb. They trained their novices ‘in choir and other ceremonies’ and admitted members to profession before they were tried in ministry.” The Society differed from them in this respect, and also in the fact that its members were expected to journey far and wide for the sake of their ministry. Commenting on Nadal’s repeated assertions that the Jesuits were not monks, O’Malley concludes: “If flight from the dangers of the world was the reason so many joined the Society, he needed to disabuse them of the mistaken notions about the character of the Society that this motivation seemed to imply. He needed to instill in them a new way of thinking about life in a religious order. For Nadal, in fact, the essence of the monk was ‘to flee the company of other human beings.’ But the essence of the Jesuit was to seek their company ‘in order to help them.’” See O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 67–8.

<sup>6</sup> D. Vance Smith, “Institutions,” in *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 160–76.

open in other spiritual traditions, but simply that it is broken open in the Society in an exemplary way. This exemplarity, at least as far as his inquiry is concerned, has to do with the practices of place associated with different manifestations of the spiritual life at different moments of its history. The claim that in the Society's *Constitutions* the closed world of monasticism is broken open serves, precisely, to bring the "practices of place" of monasticism into relief, along with the ideals that support them.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most compelling of the more recent treatments of monasticism as a cultural paradigm can be found in Pranger's inquiry, already alluded to in Part Two of this study, into what he refers to as the "poetics of monasticism."<sup>8</sup> Pranger approaches the problem of *contemptus mundi* by considering it as more than a "lament about the bleak prospects of the human condition" in light of the sinfulness of both the human soul and of the world.<sup>9</sup> Beyond this lament and the actual loathing into which it often evolved, *contemptus mundi* also designates the essential impetus behind the erection of the "artifice" of the monastery. The "poetics" of which Pranger speaks is in this sense not limited to those works by monastic authors exhibiting either in whole or in part definite "poetic" qualities or ambitions. It also covers the *poiesis*, or production, of the "artificial" world in which such works come into being and to which they attest. This artificiality is not meant to designate this world's "falsity," but the fact that it is a "made" world, a deliberate alternative to what occurs "naturally" and thus originating in the human initiative to "institute" particular realities. The monastery as an institutional artifice rests on a contraction of the realm of one's activities and on a subjection of life's rhythms to a repetitive circularity. Both result in a "density" aimed at affirming, in Pranger's evocative formulation, "the hold of eternity over time."<sup>10</sup> The philosophy of *contemptus mundi* is in this view nothing but a perspective on the world from the vantage point of this artifice. In contrast to the spatial and temporal definition and density of this artifice and to their intimations of a "fulfilled eschatology," the world presents a "diffuse area of weak structures" haunted by the sense of "the insignificance of everything."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred*, 33–63.

<sup>8</sup> Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity*, 3–12.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. Pranger pursues the topic of density most extensively in relation to the work of Anselm of Canterbury (107–90).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

Pranger's inquiry into this artificial "life without a shadow" deserves to be commended for the attention it devotes to the fact that this life remains vulnerable to the machinations of "the demon of noon." Every artifice is aware that its sustainability is a problem, Pranger suggests, and the artifice of monasticism is no different: it is undermined by the very intensity that it posits as a norm. Pranger views the outbursts of melancholy and tepidity that periodically assault the monk—as witnessed by the writings he analyzes—as manifestations of the this inability to sustain this intensity. Following this view, the opening of the closed world of monasticism could be interpreted as something inevitable, something that was literally fated to occur to the extent that it is a necessary component of the artificiality of any artifice. The developments associated with this opening would in turn be expressions of an immanent logic that is neither opposed nor external to this artifice.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps what is most striking about the Society, regarded against the backdrop of monasticism's decline, is the fact that it views the opening of the monastic enclosure not, as is the case with monastic culture, as an outcome to be averted, but as something that is considered to be desirable and as something that must be brought into effect. This should make it possible to speak, in opposition to the "poetics of monasticism," of a "poetics of the world." The distance between the two, I would like to propose, is perhaps best grasped by looking at how the metaphor of the instrument is understood by each. Indeed, the metaphor figures prominently not only in the Society's understanding of its relation to monastic tradition, but also in monastic culture itself, in the definition of the "spiritual art" (*ars spiritualis*) of asceticism. I want to briefly look at this use of the metaphor, before considering whether it is indeed legitimate to align the Society with a "poetics of the world."

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 191. Pranger, who remarks that "the farewell to the old world" has not been articulated as such by scholars, is interested in the possibilities held in store, in this regard, by the concept of "exile," which he views as "a self-imposed expulsion from the monastic paradise" (191). His focus is not, to mention two examples already discussed above, on the appearance of the mendicant orders or the creation of cathedral schools, but on representative texts of early modern forms of devotion. It is the latter's "absorption of monastic culture," he argues, that has prevented a clear articulation of the "*cérémonie des adieux*" and of the exile from the *paradisus claustral*. In opposition to the seemingly more historiographically responsible tendency to emphasize continuities and the "fluidity" of "dividing lines," he proposes to focus on a series of contrasts that become apparent through exemplars of that "more urbane" devotion. Needless to say, the *Exercises* figure prominently in this inquiry. See, in this connection, the chapter titled "Text and Soul: Calvin, Ignatius, Eckhart," 212–232.

At its most fundamental, asceticism designates a discipline aimed at the cultivation of the virtues. This discipline rests on the authority of the law of God and of reason, and it expresses itself in action. Its realm is that of the *vita activa*, a term that refers to those concrete practices in which one strives for complete conformity with the will of God. It is distinguished, in theory at least, from the *vita contemplativa*, whose realm is that of the intellectual reflection on the divinity.<sup>13</sup> One must be careful, in this context, not to view asceticism and corporeal mortification as equivalent. The practice of virtue, aimed at the consolidation of a set of desirable habits, can certainly benefit from corporeal mortification. In the end, though, corporeal mortification is ultimately only one of a wide-ranging set of means that, as noted above, also includes the observance of the dictates of reason and of God's commandments. The ascetic life is thus not by definition a life of austerity. It is defined, instead, by the cultivation of the virtues and ultimately by the desire to do God's will. This is not to deny the importance of mortification or the central place assigned to it even if in theory it was only meant to be a means among others. That in practice it would become a privileged expression of ascetic aspirations certainly demands to be recognized. But so does the emphasis on a "discipline of self-transformation," centered on the overcoming of the self, that asceticism has stood for since its earliest codifications, precisely because it was through an appeal to this more comprehensive definition that mortification's monopoly on the ascetic life could be challenged.

Asceticism's place within monastic culture is clearly spelled out in the Benedictine *Rule*, the basis of monastic culture in the West.<sup>14</sup> We

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<sup>13</sup> One widespread misconception holds that the *paradisus claustralis* is the refuge of contemplation, in opposition to a world understood as the privileged domain of action, when in reality the monastery makes room for both a "theoretical" and a "practical" life—to echo an established way of formulating the distinction between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*. There is as much 'action' in the monastic paradise as there can be 'contemplation' in the world it presumably opposes. This should come as no surprise, as it is not so much a negation of the world, but the establishment of a vision of what the world should be, that the cloister aims to secure. Its purported "unworldliness" is simply the form taken by a desire "to construct new sets of social relations and understandings." Cf. Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 6. Sheldrake speaks eloquently about the integration of different facets of life within the monastery in *Spaces for the Sacred*, 99.

<sup>14</sup> *Regula monachorum* (Montserrat: Johannes Luschner, 1499). English translation in *The Rule of Our Most Holy Father St. Benedict, Patriarch of Monks, from the Old English Edition of 1638* (London: Washbourne, 1875). For a discussion of the *Rule* and its exemplarity, see Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 111–37; Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and The Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 11–24; James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 5–59.

know that Polanco consulted the Benedictine *Rule* as he worked on the preparatory drafts for the *Constitutions*, and that Ignatius had himself already begun a review of the *Rule* shortly after he was elected to the post of General Superior. Of interest here is the *Rule's* fourth chapter, which famously sets out to explain, in as detailed a fashion as possible, “which are the instruments of good works [*quae sunt instrumenta bonorum operum*].”<sup>15</sup> This reference to ‘instruments’ and ‘works’ is crucial in that it serves to qualify asceticism as an ‘art,’ as a collection of prescriptions whose purpose is to orient the execution of particular works. One thing that is distinctive about this art is that these prescriptions—the *Rule* lists a total of seventy-two—are themselves considered to be its instruments. To follow these prescriptions, to avail oneself of them as instruments, is to execute one of those good works on which the monk’s entire concern with perfection and his desire to attain to an angelic existence are known to rest.

Included among the prescriptions listed in the *Rule*, we find the divine commandments against killing, adultery, stealing, coveting, and bearing false witness. The list extends further, however, as monks are also asked to honor other men, relieve the poor, clothe the naked, visit the sick, bury the dead, and comfort the sad. The fulfillment of these rules is supposed to further a ‘spiritual’ labor possessed, according to Benedict, of both a ‘manual’ and an ‘intellectual’ counterpart. The characterization of the monastery that supports the Benedictine discussion of this labor and of the “instruments of the spiritual art” (*instrumenta artis spiritualis*) is worthy of note in this regard: “The workshop [*officina*] where all these things are to be done is the cloister of the monastery, and steadfast abiding [*stabilitas*] in the congregation.”<sup>16</sup>

I spoke above of a distinction between a “poetics of monasticism” and a “poetics of the world,” and of the possibility of grasping this distinction by looking at how the metaphor of the instrument is understood by each. Two points should suffice here:

1. First, unlike the monk of whom Benedict speaks, the Jesuit is not asked to wield a series of instruments for the cultivation of the virtues: the *Constitutions* indicate that he is himself expected to emerge as an instrument. God’s work is not reflected in the individual’s spiritual labor,

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<sup>15</sup> *Regula monachorum*, IV.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., IV.73.

in the “works” by which he seeks to grow in virtue and ultimately in such growth.<sup>17</sup> Instead, God’s work is mediated by the individual, as a result of his instrumentalization and his disposition towards the divine hand.

2. Second, the instruments that Benedict discusses, along with the work they support, are to be mobilized within the confines of the cloister. This is not true of the instruments mentioned in the *Constitutions*, which speak of the Society as existing in order “to travel across the world [*discurrir por el mundo*]”.<sup>18</sup> That work of God’s which is mediated by the individual also presupposes the existence of a “workshop,” to be found not in the cloister but in the entire world. This should come as no surprise, since to say that the individual is an instrument means, at its most fundamental, that his action is directed towards others: as I noted in Part Two of this study, the Jesuit conception of the salvation of oneself as insufficient is the basic presupposition of a commitment to instruction that, in accordance with the concept of *doctrina*, is consummated in the instruction of others. The Society’s dispersion is the form taken by the search for this otherness. The constitution of the instrument is in this sense bound up with a suspension of the cloisterly *stabilitas*.

In the end, the two dimensions of the distinction need to be considered together. The instrumentalization of the individual and the emergence of the world as God’s workshop exist in a specular relation to each other. The *Constitutions* themselves suggest that the instrument’s effective deployment is premised upon its penetration into *diversas regiones y lugares*. The way they speak of the Society’s *discurrir por el mundo* and of its presence *entre fieles e infieles* underscores, in this sense, a further aspect of the metaphor of the instrument, over and above what it says about the individual’s relation to God’s providential work. There is, the *Constitutions* suggest, a crucial link between the instrument’s efficacy and its own dispersion, between the instrument’s capacity to do what it is intended to do and the transitory nature of its attachment to a particular place, its *mutabilitas*. The Jesuit is expected to commit himself to an itinerant lifestyle, for even if he is assigned to a place, it is in a provisional manner. Never

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<sup>17</sup> The assumption here is of course that such “works” must be ascribed to God rather than to human accomplishments, in a way that avoids the accusations that Luther would hurl at this conception of the ascetic life.

<sup>18</sup> *Cons.*, 605.

should such an assignment compromise the disposition to be willing to go wherever it is judged that one might work *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.

So far I have spoken of the metaphor of the instrument as a cipher that encapsulates a particular understanding of the Society's essence. Part Two of this study was devoted to a definition of this essence on the basis of a genealogy of the metaphor and of what the metaphor itself, understood in relation to this genealogy, can tell us about the group's mission and about its relation to the world. I noted, however, that the normative formulations of the *Constitutions* must be placed in relation to a history that shows how this conception of the Society's essence gained definition. The definitive codification of this essence, as I hope to show in what follows, is the outcome of a process that comprises specific junctures of Ignatius' own government of the Society, and which we can trace primarily in the letters that Ignatius wrote in his capacity as the Society's first General Superior.<sup>19</sup>

The Portuguese crisis, which I touched upon at the opening and which I plan to discuss at length, is an example of the kind of juncture that interests me. So is another crisis with which Ignatius was forced to grapple, and which concerned the Society's outpost in Gandía. Both have been amply discussed by scholars, particularly by historians of the early years of the Society.<sup>20</sup> So far, however, they have been approached as separate events. Even when they are discussed in relation to the challenges that Ignatius and those around him confronted, the clear links between them and the larger phenomenon under which both can be brought tend to be overlooked. It is my intention here to call attention to this larger phenomenon, best described as an inquiry into the place, within the fledgling Society, of the ascetic drive.

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<sup>19</sup> The most exhaustive study of Ignatius' correspondence is Dominique Bertrand, *La Politique de s. Ignace de Loyola: L'analyse sociale* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1985). Two studies of Jesuit epistolary culture that are particularly relevant to this discussion are Markus Friedrich, "Government and Information-Management in Early Modern Europe: The Case of the Society of Jesus (1540–1773)," *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 (2009): 1–25, and Federico Palomo, "Corregir letras para unir espíritus: los jesuitas y las cartas edificantes en el Portugal del siglo XVI," *Cuadernos de historia moderna* 4 (2005), 57–81.

<sup>20</sup> The most comprehensive discussion of the crisis in Gandía can be found in Manuel Ruiz Jurado, "Un caso de profetismo reformista en la Compañía de Jesús: Gandía, 1547–1549," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 43 (1974): 217–66. See, also, Eduardo Javier Alonso Romo, "Andrés de Oviedo, Patriarca de Etiopía," *Península: Revista De Estudios Ibéricos*, no. 3 (2006): 213–232; Francisco Pons Fuster, "El mecenazgo cultural de los Borja de Gandía: erasmismo e iluminismo," *Estudis: Revista de historia moderna*, no. 21 (1995): 23–44.

The other aspect that I emphasize in my discussion of the events in Coimbra and Gandía concerns the role played, in Ignatius' attempts to deal with both, by the metaphor of the instrument and by the questions associated with it. Ignatius is attuned to a crucial paradox at the heart of asceticism, oriented as it is at once towards the perfection and towards the overcoming of self, the self's perfection being contingent, precisely, on this overcoming. Self-centered even in its rejection of self-centeredness, the ascetic life could seem to be opposed to the concern with the salvation of others, making it possible, perhaps, to speak of an opposition between asceticism and an instrument defined by such a concern. This perception is indeed what accounts for Ignatius' reservations about the ascetic drive.

At the same time, it cannot be denied that the instrument's effective deployment rests on a manifestation of this drive itself. The passage in the *Constitutions* that speaks of the union between the instrument and God's hand makes it clear that this union is contingent on the performance of "spiritual exercises of devotion" and ultimately on the practice of the *Exercises*. Is it not contradictory to claim that Ignatius had 'reservations' about the ascetic drive, considering that he is the author of a work whose ascetic filiation was never disavowed? The word 'exercises,' as is well known, is a translation of the Greek *askesis*.

One could argue that the instrument transcends asceticism to the extent that it is oriented towards others, and to the extent that this orientation places it in the world rather than in the cloister. This would imply that the *Exercises*, the practice of which, according to the *Constitutions*, makes it possible for the instrument to be effectively deployed, are an ascetic work that ultimately transcends asceticism and its characteristic self-centeredness. This, however, ignores a question that Ignatius himself was quick to raise. Is not the commitment to instruction, the defining concern of the instrument, an instance of the overcoming of self-centeredness, oriented as it is, in the final instance, towards the salvation of others? On such grounds it should be possible to assimilate the defining concern of the instrument to the cultivation of virtue, in a way that would place the instrumentalization of the individual in the service of the ascetic drive.

Ignatius was aware of these ambiguities. They constitute the heart of his critique, and the reason why it is appropriate to speak of a 'critique' rather than of a 'criticism' of ascetic ideals. His aim is to offer an analysis of the ascetic drive that is rigorously attuned to the problems it raises. This is not to say, though, that in the end Ignatius is himself ambiguous. He is in fact quite clear about the fact that there is a tension between the

instrument and the ascetic drive. To see this, we must pay close attention to the specificity of his critique, in other words, to the particular expressions of the ascetic drive on which it focuses. Ignatius is concerned with those practices that fall under the rubric of mortification—long vigils, excessive fasting, severe penance—and that he considers to be dangerous precisely to the extent that they can end up damaging the instrument. Indeed, Ignatius' critique of ascetic ideals, as I show in what follows, is informed by a concern with damage, in a way that turns his reflection on asceticism into yet another site for the articulation of his instrumental vision.

I emphasize this concern with damage so as to show, as I anticipated above, how the metaphor becomes a site in which the Society's complex relation to monastic tradition is negotiated. But I am also interested in what this concern implies for certain expedients that become necessary in light of the group's commitment to the instruction of others and of the expectation that the instruments in charge of this instruction scatter throughout the world. Of special importance here is the growing prominence assigned to obedience. Linked to the possibility of damage, ascetic pursuits are fundamentally opposed to the instrument. For Ignatius, the way to avert this possibility is to place the ascetic drive under the authority of a superior endowed with the prerogative to discern whether and how the drive must find expression. Ignatius' reflection on obedience, which begins with this assertion, is among the most polemical aspects of his legacy. The fact that he speaks of obedience in connection with an attempt to ensure that the instrument remains operative can only serve as further indication of the metaphor's significance.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE *RARA AVIS* OF DISCERNMENT

The Society's presence in Portugal dates from 1540, the year that Francis Xavier and Simão Rodrigues arrived in Lisbon. Both were warmly welcomed by King John III, who in fact had heard favorable reports about the Jesuits' exploits while in Paris and who went so far as to lobby for the Society's recognition in the Roman curia through his court's ambassador.<sup>1</sup> Portugal was at the time a kind of threshold into Africa, India, and America, and both Xavier and Rodrigues' presence there is evidence of an awareness, on the part of the first Jesuits, that the kingdom's support would be essential to the Society's aim to establish a presence throughout the world.

While both Xavier and Rodrigues intended to travel to the farther reaches of King John III's empire, only the former continued on his journey, eventually making it to India, Japan, and China. Rodrigues' wish was to accompany him, but he ended up staying in Portugal when it became clear that, if the Society was to cultivate a partnership with the Portuguese court, a permanent presence there would be necessary. I noted in the previous chapter that Rodrigues, himself of Portuguese origin, was a member of the lower nobility; possessed of a magnetic personality, he was held in high esteem by King John III and his court. He would act as the superior of the Jesuits for the six years following his arrival, first in an informal capacity and then, once the kingdom was officially incorporated into the Society, as its first Provincial. It was he who oversaw the establishment of the Jesuit house in Lisbon and of the colleges of Coimbra and Évora.<sup>2</sup>

The impressive growth that the Society would witness in the years following Xavier and Rodrigues' arrival in Lisbon in itself implied a challenge. Dauril Alden writes that a large number of recruits were in search of "an environment where they might live a spiritually pristine existence and avoid some of the troubling burdens of surviving in the external world."

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<sup>1</sup> Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stanford University Press, 1996), 25–6.

<sup>2</sup> Three colleges followed. They were located in Porto, Braga, and Bragança. *Ibid.*, 28–33.

Citing Thomas Cohen's survey of a questionnaire written by Nadal and circulated among Jesuits in the Iberian peninsula five years after Ignatius' death, Alden writes that many recruits "sought escape from the confusions and perils of their world" and that "about half of them were primarily concerned about their own souls rather than the welfare of others." The Society's position on a vision of the spiritual life centered on the motif of *contemptus mundi* seems not to have been apparent to a large proportion of these young recruits: "Shockingly few," Alden writes, "aspired to become soul curers in the distant reaches of the Portuguese empire and beyond."<sup>3</sup> What makes this "shocking," of course, is the fact that, in the eyes of the Society's founders, the group existed for the *cura animarum*.

Desiring to withdraw from the world and concerned primarily about their own souls, a number of these recruits would have perhaps felt more at home in a traditional monastic order. They seemed, at any rate, to have spent more time fasting, praying, and doing penance than living in the manner advocated by the Society. One can turn to Alden's interpretation of Cohen's findings, and argue that behind this outburst of ascetic fervor lay a series of misunderstandings surrounding the Society's fittingness for those who sought to escape from the world. Certainly this must hold true at least for some of the recruits. The sources, however, also tell a different story, one that centers on the perception that some had of the period of studies required of those who gained admittance into the Society. This period appeared to some to be an idle time. The fact that one was not helping others out in the world meant that one was not being as useful as one thought one could be. Once again, it is important to consider here the Society's conception of its own mission, and the way in which one's salvation can appear to be contingent, to the extent that it is declared to be in and of itself not sufficient, on what one does for the salvation of others: prevented from helping other souls, some of the scholastics in Coimbra seem to have believed that they were being deprived of what was supposed to be a privileged means of spiritual growth and a way to work for their own salvation. It seems sensible, then, to assume that, rather than lacking the aspiration to devote themselves to the *cura animarum*, some of the scholastics were so eager to do so that they grew impatient with their studies and, frustrated with the postponement, for the purposes of preparation, of a project that was meant to contribute to their spiritual growth and ultimately to their own salvation, they turned

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 37.

to the means for spiritual growth that tradition had sanctioned: fasting, praying, and doing penance were their ways of growing in virtue in the present, in sharp contrast to a practice that for the moment existed only in the future.

Dispatched on 7 May 1547, Ignatius' letter to Coimbra leaves the discussion of the scholastics' behavior for the second of its two sections.<sup>4</sup> Ignatius opens, instead, with an exhortation that, after reminding the young recruits of the worth of their mission, emphasizes the importance of both the pursuit of learning (*letras*) and the cultivation of virtue (*virtudes*). Only by making diligent preparations in both can the scholastics hope, in Ignatius' words, "to answer to the expectations which so many people have of you."<sup>5</sup> To respond effectively to these expectations and to address the different challenges that the Church is confronting, Ignatius then writes, the scholastics must consider the specific nature of their vocation: the way of life they have chosen to follow is their answer to the call by which God has sought not only to draw them towards him—that holds true for all who believe—but also to place them at a safe remove "from the dangerous gulf of this world."<sup>6</sup>

While Ignatius' words evoke the animating spirit of the philosophy of *contemptus mundi*, the scholastics' separation from the world is meant to be provisional. Ignatius reminds them that they were created not only for "the honor and glory of God" and for "your salvation," but also for "the assistance of others."<sup>7</sup> If they find themselves at a certain remove from the world, it is not only to make it easier for them to focus their understanding on the things of the spirit, but also to make the most of a formation that is necessary if they are to be of assistance to others, a formation that should encompass not only *virtudes* but also *letras*. Indeed, growth in *letras* is necessary, we read, if the scholastics are to help others through instruction: "Those who instruct others in righteousness," Ignatius writes in an echo of a passage from the Book of Daniel, "'shall shine like the stars of the firmament for ever and ever.'"<sup>8</sup> If the scholastics are to instruct

<sup>4</sup> Ep., 1:495–510. English translation in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, 171–181.

<sup>5</sup> Ep., 1:497.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ep., 1:498.

<sup>8</sup> Ep., 1:501. The passage is found in Dan 12:3.

others, they must be first instructed. This is the first hint of a valorization of the time of studies, one of the letter's central concerns.

The emphasis on instruction that I discussed in Part Two of this study, to the extent that it is ultimately oriented towards others, implies that in the case of the Jesuit who is to serve as God's instrument one's salvation does not, in spite of what is stated in the *Exercises'* Principle and Foundation, exhaust the purpose for which one has been created. Ignatius does not mean to suggest, however, that the scholastics should pay no attention to virtue. To the contrary, he explicitly encourages them to apply themselves to it with the same diligence they are being asked to show in their studies:

In the field of studies the difference between one who works hard and one who is lazy is obvious, but that difference is there too when it comes to overcoming the wild passions and weaknesses that affect our nature and to acquiring virtues. For it is clear that slackers, owing to their failure to struggle against themselves, take longer to attain peace of mind and soul, if indeed they ever do. Nor do they ever completely acquire any of the virtues. By contrast, those who are keen and who work at these things make quick progress, both in studies and also in the personal sphere. Experience shows us that the contentment that can be had in this life is to be found not among the lazy, but rather among those who are bubbling over with keenness for God's service. This stands to reason. These people are making an effort of their own to overcome themselves and get rid of self-centeredness [*deshazer el amor propio*]. This means they also get rid of all the roots of the wild passions and trouble. Moreover they are acquiring virtues as habits, and so come as a matter of course to act spontaneously and cheerfully in accord with those virtues.<sup>9</sup>

The passage is worth a closer look. Having distinguished between *letras* and *virtudes*—even if in order to convey that they in fact make similar demands—Ignatius abruptly effaces the difference between them. With the mention of those who are “bubbling over with keenness for God's service” (*fervientes en el servicio*) as examples of the assiduousness that

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<sup>9</sup> “En las letras clara se vey la differentia del diligente y el negligente; pero ay la misma en el vencer de las passiones y flaquezas, á que nuestra natura es subiecta, y en el adquirir las virtudes. Porque es cierto que los remisos, por no pelear contra sí, tarde ó nunca llegan á la paz del ánima, ni ha posseer virtud alguna enteramente; donde los strenuos y diligentes en breue tiempo passan muy adelante en lo vno y lo otro. Pues el contentamiento, que en esta vida puede hauerse, la experientia muestra que se halla, no en los flojos, sino en los que son heruientes en el seruicio de Dios. Y con razón; porque sforzándose de su parte á vencer á sí mismos y deshazer el amor propio, quiten con él las raizes de las passiones y molestias todas, y también, con alcançar los hábitos virtuosos, vienen naturalmente á obrar conforme a ellos fácil y alegremente.” *Ep.*, 1:499–50.

should characterize the pursuit of virtue, the central category of the field of *letras* is brought under that of *virtudes*: serving others, the aim of instruction and of the instrument, emerges suddenly as the supreme mode of the self-overcoming associated with virtue in light of the basic but crucial fact that, oriented as it is towards others, it is a form of “getting rid of self-centeredness” (*deshacer el amor propio*). If getting rid of self-centeredness is the aim of the cultivation of virtue, then service is the way to achieve it. One dimension of the scholastics’ task (*letras*) absorbs the other (*virtudes*) as the instruction of others emerges as a form of self-denial. In this way the stage is set for an emphasis on studies and for the closing injunction to study hard and to understand the worth of the period in which growth in *letras* is the focus.

The emphasis on instruction, starting with the scholastics’ own instruction, will prove central to Ignatius’ attempt to articulate the Society’s mission with greater precision. This attempt makes itself present from the very outset of the letter, where we read that self-denial is an end common to all other orders; the scholastics, however, have not been called to other orders but to the fledgling Society, and they are required to think of self-denial not simply as the “general orientation” of their lives but as their supreme end, “throwing your whole life and everything you do into this enterprise.”<sup>10</sup> Ignatius has only to then specify that self-denial can and should take the form of service for the scholastics to assume that such service must be more than a general orientation. A monastic *topos*, that of the monk as striving to resemble an angel, appears in order to sanction this view: “There is no more noble activity for human beings, or even for angels, than that of glorifying one’s creator and, as far as they are able, of drawing creatures back to him.”<sup>11</sup> When this point is reiterated later on, the emphasis on a service that consists, specifically, in drawing creatures back to God is seen as a way of differentiating the Society from all other orders: “If this is the case for all Christians who honor and serve God,” he continues, “you can see how great your crown will be if you conform to our institute, which consists not only in serving God yourselves, but in attracting many others to God’s honor and service.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ep.*, 1:498.

<sup>11</sup> “no solamente entre hombres, pero entre ángeles no se hallan más nobles exercitos que el glorificar al criador suyo y el reducir las criaturas suyas á él, quanto son capaces.” *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> “Y si esto es en todo xpiano, que á Dios honrra y sirue, podéys entender quanta sera vuestra corona, si responderéys á nuestro instituto, que es, no solamente seruir á Dios por vosotros mismos, pero attrayendo otros muchos al seruicio suyo y honra.” *Ep.*, 1:500–1.

In the end, Ignatius' exhortation does more than establish the worth of the time of instruction and its relation to the Society's mission. It also provides the basis for his characterization of the scholastics, and of Jesuits in general, in instrumental terms. Ignatius writes to the scholastics that if they were truly to understand the importance of setting their sights on Christ's honor and on the salvation of others, "you would see how imperative it is to dispose yourselves, with all possible effort and exertion, towards becoming suitable instruments of divine grace."<sup>13</sup> The statement's very placement in the letter says much about its importance: inserted at the very end of the first part, it serves as a kind of synthesis of what has been discussed and as the climax of the entire exhortation. It also lies exactly at the center of the letter, constituting, as will become apparent shortly, the secret nucleus of Ignatius' message. The metaphor's appearance should of course come as no surprise. The emphasis on instruction would in fact seem to require it. The entire effort to establish the worth of the time of instruction can in fact be read as an attempt to specify the conditions for the scholastics' instrumentalization. Just as the emphasis on instruction unfolds with a view to this aim, so does the scholastics' status as instruments imply an understanding of the worth of instruction.

The instrument's emergence as a figure of instruction sets the stage for a more specific characterization of the pursuit of virtue. No longer is it a question simply of self-denial. In the second half of the letter, Ignatius speaks, instead, of the concrete form in which self-denial had manifested itself in Coimbra: at stake are those ascetic pursuits—fasting, prayers, penance—which he found so troubling. The opposition between *letras* and *virtudes* that organizes the first half of the letter thus gives way, in the second half, to an opposition between the instrument and the ascetic drive. It is in terms of this opposition that one can understand what was particularly troubling about the scholastics' pursuits. The stakes of the opposition, one can anticipate here, remain the same. Just as growth in *letras* could in the end fulfill the aims of and in that way subsume growth in *virtudes*, so is the instrument meant to facilitate the overcoming of the ascetic drive.

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<sup>13</sup> "veríades quán deuida cosa es que os dispongáys á todo trabajo y diligentia por hazeros idóneos instrumentos de la diuina gracia." *Ep.*, 1:503.

What does the discussion of the ascetic drive gain by bringing the metaphor of the instrument into play? Right after the scholastics are asked to think of themselves as instruments of divine grace, Ignatius explains that the future of the Church rests on them and that they should therefore avoid being “slack or tepid” in their preparations. A crucial warning follows: “What I have said so far to wake up those of you who are asleep,” Ignatius writes, “and to spur on those dawdling and loitering along the way, is not meant to be a license for going to the opposite extreme, undisciplined enthusiasm [*Y lo que hasta aquí he dicho para despertar á quien dormiesse, y correr más á quien se detuviesse y parasse en la vía, no ha de ser para que se tome ocasión de dar en el extremo contrario del indiscreto fervor*].”<sup>14</sup> Precisely because much is expected of the scholastics, they should be careful not to allow their fervor to compromise their capacity to fulfill those expectations in the long run. An excessively zealous attitude, Ignatius suggests, might prove threatening, particularly when it comes to the perfection of virtue through fasts, vigils, and penance. These pursuits render people incapable of “serving God in the long haul,” as they squander their energies and potentially ruin their health. In this way they might be said to go against the very purpose for which the scholastics are in the college in the first place. Furthermore, overzealous actions are themselves self-defeating and ultimately unsustainable, since the “weakness” (*flaqueza*) they bring about can only prevent one from continuing “to exercise the virtues.”<sup>15</sup> The central presupposition of every reference to the instrument is that the instrument will be operative. If the ascetic pursuit of virtue is threatening, it is because it has the capacity to compromise the instrument’s efficacy.

While some of the scholastics might have been ascetically inclined, some seemed to have embarked on various forms of mortification out of a sense of frustration with the time of instruction that was required if they were to emerge as instruments. As I noted above, from the perspective of a program of studies geared towards helping others by instructing them, the time of studies could appear to be an idle period. Ignatius is aware of this: “Do not think that you are of no use to others during the

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<sup>14</sup> *Ep.*, 1:504. Curiously, in warning the scholastics that his initial exhortation is not meant to be a license for engaging in the opposite of half-heartedness, the predicament to which Ignatius’ letter is known to have been responding becomes a possibility that his own words might bring about. Excessive zeal is seen as the possible product of an inability to determine what Ignatius expects of the scholastics. This is consistent with Ignatius’ efforts to identify, shortly after, a deficit in the scholastics’ discernment.

<sup>15</sup> *Ep.*, 1:505.

time of studies," he feels it necessary to tell the scholastics towards the end of the letter.<sup>16</sup> To this end, he argues that the neighbor is served with the very intention to serve him, that the studies on which any scholastic has embarked express that intention, and that anyone who has this intention is making an offering of himself to God. If God deigns to accept his offering, he then writes, then the one who offers himself "can be no less an instrument for helping others than are sermons or confessions."<sup>17</sup> The instrument is not only an instrument in the act of instructing others. Its own instruction, as a statement about its future instruction of others, already makes it an instrument. In other words, "even if death cuts someone short before they have begun to deal with others in public, this does not undo the service given to others in the work of preparation."<sup>18</sup> Those who have not understood this—and the purpose of the letter is to enlighten the scholastics in this regard—might fail to see how the growth in *letras* might contribute to their growth in *virtudes*. They might fail to see that they are already instruments and thus participating, through their intention to serve, in that service that epitomizes the self-denial in which virtue consists. Understandably, they might want to grow in *virtudes* through fasting, vigils, and penance.

Ignatius clearly states that these pursuits are not in and of themselves objectionable. They express a desire to die to oneself, and resonate with a long and venerable tradition that testifies to its intrinsic worth. For this reason, they cannot be simply proscribed. Even if he did wish to propose an alternative, he does not seek to challenge their validity. What troubles him, instead, is the excesses towards which the ascetic pursuit of virtue, judging by the rumors that reached him, had proved capable of reaching. Ignatius' diagnosis of the problem is unambiguous, and it is already announced in his warning against that "undisciplined enthusiasm" (*indiscreto feruor*) that he opposes to "tepidity." As the word *indiscreto* indicates, the excesses that might damage the instrument, compromising its capacity to serve God *a la larga*, betray an absence of discernment (*discreción*). Strictly speaking this is not the discernment that the *Exercises* discuss. What Ignatius has in mind in this case is not the authentication of

<sup>16</sup> "en este comedio que el studio dura, no os parezca que soys invitiles al próximo." *Ep.*, 1:508.

<sup>17</sup> "no menos podría ser instrumento para ayudar al prójimo que las predicaciones y confesiones." *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "aunque la muerte atajasse á alguno antes que commençasse à communicarse al prójimo, no por eso dexará de hauer servido en el trabajo de prepararse." *Ibid.*

opposing spirits and the motions associated with them but, quite simply, a capacity to determine the prudent mean. In the end the two might not lie as far apart as one might think. Later on there will be an occasion to investigate the precise relation between them. What matters for now is that, as is the case with the *Exercises*, the instrument's operativity remains linked to the field of discernment. The very concern with its potential inoperativity, a possible outcome of an excessive indulgence in mortification, is in itself a response to and thus symptomatic of a lacking capacity to determine just how much is too much.

I remark on this relation between the instrument's damage and the lack of discernment in light of the remedy that Ignatius has in mind for this lack: "If discernment seems to you to be a rare bird [*rara ave*] not easily held," he writes, "you should at least supplement it with obedience, which will always be a secure guide."<sup>19</sup> The passage echoes the third of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons on Christ's circumcision.<sup>20</sup> Shortly before, and again in an echo of Bernard's words, Ignatius has spoken of the damaged instrument as evidence of a "sacrilege," capable in light of its "scandalous" qualities of spoiling the peace of a community:

The sight of one person's fall does frighten many others and retards their spiritual growth, and the people concerned run the risk of pride and vain-glory, following their own judgment rather than anyone else's, or at least taking a role that is not rightly theirs, as they have become judges in their own cases when by rights the judge should be their superior.<sup>21</sup>

Ignatius proposes the scholastics that they "supplement" a lacking capacity to discern the prudent mean with obedience to their superior's judgment. He suggests, in other words, that they rely on someone who will be able to dictate the most beneficial manner in which their fervor might be expressed. Their excessive mortifications might not be so excessive, and hence objectionable, were they not to follow their own judgment. There is, of course, something contradictory about allowing the scholastics to

<sup>19</sup> "Y si os pareziere rara ave la discretión y difícil de hauer, á lo menos supplidla con la de la obedientia, cuyo conseyo será seguro." *Ep.*, 1:506.

<sup>20</sup> "Quia omnino rara ista avis est in terris, huius discretionis locum in vobis, fratres, suppleat virtus oboedientiae, ut nihil plus, nihil minus, nihil aliter quam imperatum sit, faciatis." *In circumcisione* 3.11.

<sup>21</sup> "el exemplo de la cayda de vno spanta á muchos, y los entibia en el prouecho spiritual; y para sí mismos corren peligro de soberuia y vanagloria, preferiendo su juicio al de los otros todos, ó á lo menos vsurpando lo que no es suyo haziéndose juezes de sus cosas, siéndolo por razón el prepósito." *Ibid.*

determine whether discernment is lacking in them—and thus to make recourse to obedience optional, an alternative to be pursued *si os pareiere rara aue la discretión*—since such a lack must itself be discerned. This might explain why immediately after obedience is first mentioned as a possible supplement, it is spoken of as the desirable and even necessary presupposition of each and every action: revising what he states in the passage quoted above, Ignatius writes that anyone contemplating a particular course of action, even if discernment does not seem to him to be a *rara avis*, “should heed what Saint Bernard would say to him: ‘If anything happens without the will and consent of the spiritual director, it is to be counted primarily as vainglory, not as merit.’”<sup>22</sup> Initially intended as an expedient for those moments in the pursuit of virtue when discernment seems elusive, obedience to the superior is transformed into something that should be in effect in everything one does.

As I have been suggesting, the instrument’s operativity initially turns out to be contingent on the subordination of the ascetic drive to a project of instruction oriented towards others and towards a virtuous overcoming of self-centeredness. The letter, however, shies away from an outright repression of the drive. Instead, the drive is subjected to a basic stricture: it becomes acceptable when it is judged to be appropriate (as regards both the expression itself and the form it takes) by one’s superior, that is to say, when it is an act of obedience. Both Ignatius’ ambivalence regarding the drive’s repression and the role assigned to obedience in the wake of it are seamlessly articulated in a passage towards the end of the letter:

I would not want you to think, on the basis of all I have written, that I do not approve of what people tell me about certain of your ways of mortification. I am well aware that the saints made use of these and other holy aberrations [*locuras sanctas*] and made progress through them. Such practices are useful for overcoming oneself, and for growing in grace, especially at the beginning. But for those who now have greater control over their self-centeredness, I think that what I have written about their restricting themselves to staying in balance and keeping to moderation is more appropriate. Such people should not act against obedience. That is the ideal I hold up to you, and insist upon, along with the other virtue, summing up all the others, on which Jesus Christ insisted so much that He called the commandment enjoining it His own commandment, ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another.’ However, you should not be content to preserve lasting unity and love among yourselves, but should spread it to all people. Take

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<sup>22</sup> “oya lo que Sant Bernardo le dize: *quod si quit sine voluntate et consensus patri spiritualis fit, imputabilis vanae gloria, non mercedi.*” Ibid.

care to sustain in your minds and hearts burning desires for the salvation of others, valuing each person at the price they cost, the blood, indeed the life, of Jesus Christ. By advancing in your academic work on the one hand, and growing in virtue in brotherly love on the other, may you come to be completely instruments of divine grace, and co-workers in that most sublime task, the bringing back of God's creatures into God's kingdom, their ultimate end.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to Ignatius' refusal to repress the ascetic drive, the passage also illustrates his concern with the scholastics' transformation into "instruments of divine grace." It is with a view to this instrumentalization that Ignatius holds up obedience as an ideal, making it clear that it is not simply a question of imposing limits upon the drive's expression, *but of having that expression and the limits that condition it imposed by someone else*. The implications of this position would be hard to overstate. Initially, discernment was elusive, a *rara avis* not easily held. The effect of this elusiveness—the absence of the capacity to determine just how much is too much, as attested to by the scholastics' *locuras sanctas*—was regarded as a problem. Swiftly, however, this absence becomes something desirable. Even if one possesses that capacity, one must allow one's superior to exercise it in one's stead.

Most discussions of the letter to Coimbra treat it as an exposition of an ideal of both intellectual and spiritual progress. Not surprisingly, the existing anthologies of Ignatius' correspondence often refer to it as the "Letter on Perfection." While the letter is certainly concerned with the scholastics' improvement in both *letras* and *virtudes*, it is also the document that most comprehensively outlines what Ignatius considered to be at stake in the

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<sup>23</sup> "No querría que con todo lo que e scritto pensássedes que yo no apprueuo lo que me han hecho saber de algunas de vuestras mortificationes; que estas y otras locuras sanctas sé que las vsabaron los sanctos á su prouecho, y son vtiles para vencerse y hauer más gracia mayormente en los principios; pero á quien tiene ya más señorío sobre el amor proprio, lo que tengo scrito de redusirse á la mediocridad de la discretión, tengo por lo mejor, no se apartando de la obedientia, la qual os encomiendo muy encarecidamente, junto con aquella virtud y compendio de todas las otras, que Jhu. Xpo. tanto encaresce, llamando el precepto della proprio suyo: *Hoc est preceptum meum, vt diligatis invicem.* Y no solamente que entre vosotros mantengáis la viñón y amor continuo, pero aun le estendáis a todos, y procuréis encender en vuestras ánimas viuos deseos de la salud del próximo, stimando lo que cada vno vale del precio de la sangre y vida de Jesu Xpo. que costó: porque de vna parte aparejando las letras, de otra augmentando la charidad fraterna, os hagáis enteros strumentos de la diuina gracia y cooperadores en esta altísima obra de reducir á Dios, como á supremo fin, sus criaturas." *Ep.*, 1:507.

characterization, found also in the *Industrias*, which were drafted around this time, and eventually in the *Constitutions*, of Jesuits as instruments.

Because it was in relation to the ascetic pursuit of virtue that these stakes are developed, Ignatius' letter to Coimbra is also the document that best captures how the Society positioned itself with respect to its predecessors and to their conception of the *opus Dei*. The fact that the letter to Coimbra shies away from an outright repression of the ascetic drive must be regarded as an indication of a compromise. This compromise reflects the prominent place assigned to this drive by tradition (Ignatius hints at this when he writes of his awareness of the progress that the saints made through their *locuras sanctas*) as much as the specific debt that the Society had to those projects in which, as was the case with monasticism, the drive held pride of place. This debt makes itself felt, indeed, in the letter itself, which borrows extensively from those monastic sources that Polanco had started to compile.<sup>24</sup>

Ignatius' ambivalence regarding the ascetic drive and the compromise it leads to become apparent through the notion that everything that happens must have the superior's consent. This has crucial implications when measured against how obedience is itself defined at one point: "If you have a great desire for mortification," Ignatius writes, "use it to break your wills and to submit your judgments under the yoke of obedience, rather than in weakening yourselves and hurting your bodies without due moderation, especially now during the time of studies."<sup>25</sup> Just as obedience aims to impose limits upon the ascetic drive, to the extent that it is aligned with the desire for mortification, its being in effect in every act could be said to express a wish to see everything transformed into an instance of mortification. Even tasks not conventionally included within the ascetic pursuit of virtue become forms of a self-overcoming not unlike the one sought through fasting, vigils, and penance. The ascetic drive, then, is not simply subjected, as I argued above, to a stricture. It is also preserved, in a sublimated and totalizing manner, in the very form that the stricture takes. From this perspective, it is not enough to speak of a refusal to repress the drive. The drive's expression is in fact encouraged. Everything can be an

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<sup>24</sup> Aside from multiple allusions to Scripture, the letter includes references to, among others, several of Bernard's sermons, and to William of Saint Thierry's *Epistola aurea*, which I discuss below.

<sup>25</sup> "Y si tenéis mucho deseo de mortification, empleadle más en quebrar vustras voluntades y sojugar vuestros juizios debaxo del yugo de la obedientia, que en debilitar los cuerpos y affligirlos sin moderation deuida, specialmente aora en tiempo de studio." Ibid.

occasion for it. What is being worked out is a way of expressing it that avoids its more dangerous consequences. This should allow us to outline with greater precision the conditions of the instrument's operativity, and also to shed light on a further element at stake in the characterization of Jesuits as instruments. Together with its virtuous commitment to instruction, we must also consider the deflection of mortification away from the body and towards the soul.

In light of this deflection, and what is in the end a preservation of the drive and an expansion of the field of its expression, it is possible to speak of an introjection, typical of a melancholy reaction to a loss, of monasticism, that to which the Society is supposed to have bid *adieu*? An entire cultural reality is preserved with the paradoxical aim of eliciting a consciousness of its loss. This holds true, as I have already indicated, not only for the *practices* associated with this reality, but also for the *sources* that evoke this reality and that the letter incorporates—the letter introjects this tradition, only to mark the distance that separates the Society from it, and in so doing to declare that it is now a thing of the past. William of Saint Thierry's *Epistola aurea*, the text from which the majority of Ignatius' references to Bernard are derived, constitutes a good example.<sup>26</sup> Wrongly attributed to the abbot of Clairvaux, this work by the famed Benedictine turned Cistercian functions both as a model for Ignatius' address and as a repository of a collection of authoritative views on the spiritual life. Ignatius' opening exhortation, his characterization of bodily exercises as potentially harmful, and his discussion of obedience are all informed by these views, fragments of which are either paraphrased or quoted.<sup>27</sup> The same goes for William's reflection on discernment and on the vainglory that results from ignoring the fact that its exercise is the absolute prerogative of the superior. This reflection centers on an analogy, developed in *De natura et dignitate amoris*, a treatise completed almost twenty years before the *Epistola aurea*, between the life of a monastic community and a terrestrial Eden. Noting that, like its Biblical counterpart, this garden houses a tree which is the subject of a prohibition, William compared the

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<sup>26</sup> William of Saint-Thierry, *The Golden Epistle*, trans. W. Shewring (London: Sheed & Ward Ltd, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> Ignatius' initial exhortation, for example, is modeled after the following passage: "Do not be careless then, do not linger on the way. A long journey remains for you to accomplish. For you have undertaken the loftiest of professions. It surpasses the heavens, it is on a level with the angels, it resembles angelic purity." *Ibid.*, § 15. Of course, it is the angel's task of drawing creatures back to God that interests Ignatius, more than a purity nourished and sustained in contemplation.

eating of the fruits of this tree with the act of arriving at a judgment and distributing directives in accordance with those judgments. In the *Epistola aurea*, this tree stands for the superior's power to determine what should be done in a particular situation—what William, in a juridically inflected language, calls *censura discretionis*:

This perfect obedience especially in the beginner does not include discernment, that is, it does not question what is bidden, or why, but all its effort is directed to the faithful and humble accomplishment of what its superior commands it to do. For the tree which gives knowledge of good and evil in paradise is in the religious life the power to decide, and it is entrusted to the spiritual father who judges all things while he himself is judged by no one. It is for him to decide, for others to obey. To his undoing, Adam tasted of the forbidden tree, led astray by him who made the suggestion: "Why has God commanded you not to eat of the tree?" There you have one questioning why the command was given. Then he went on: "For he knew that on the day you ate your eyes would be opened and you would be like gods." There you have what is commanded, namely that he would not allow them to become gods. He decided, he ate, and, falling into disobedience, he was expelled from paradise. So it is impossible for one who, in the animal state, decides for himself, a prudent novice, a wise beginner, to stay in his cell for a long time or to persevere in the community. Let him become foolish if he is to be wise, and let this be the whole of his discretion, to be entirely without discretion in this. Let this be the whole of his wisdom, to be wholly lacking in wisdom in this respect.<sup>28</sup>

William's discussion of discernment and of the obedience due to the superior suggests a restoration of paradise within the confines of the monastery; Ignatius', by contrast, places the accent on a project of instruction and on the work that it claims to further. As it is discussed in the letter to Coimbra, this work clearly exceeds the confines of the Jesuit college: the instrument exists with a view to its engagement with those outside its walls, as it is in encountering them that its capacity to instruct is

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<sup>28</sup> "Lingum enim scientiae boni et mali in paradiso, censura discretionis est in conversatione religionis, penes patrem spiritualem, qui dijudicat omnia, ipse vero a nemine dijudicatur. Ipsi est discernere, aliorum est oboedire. Adam gustavit in malum suum de ligno vetito, edoctus ab eo qui sugerendo ait: Quare praecepit vobis Deus, ut de ligno non comederetis? Ecce discretio: cur praeceptum sit. Et addidit: Sciebat enim, quia qua die comederitis, aperientur oculi vestri et eritis sicut dii. Ecce quid praeceptum sit: scilicet, quod deos fieri non sinat. Discrevit, comedit, inobediens factus est, et de paradiso ejectus est. Sic et animalem discretum, novitium prudentem, incipientem sapientem: in cella posse diu consistere, in congregazione durare, impossible est. Stultus fiat, ut si sapiens. Et hoc omnis sit ejus discretio, ut in hoc nulla ei sit discretio. Haec omnis ejus sapientia sit, ut in hac parte nulla ei sit." Ibid., § 53–4.

actualized. William's discussion, by contrast, centers on the cloister and, within the cloister, on the monk's cell. And where the resemblance between *cella* and *celum* allows William to identify an opening towards heaven and thus a movement away from the world, the work spoken of in the letter to Coimbra is oriented towards the very world from which the scholastics have been temporarily removed in order to prepare for a task that will ultimately return them to it. Heaven and eternity are displaced by the work to be done among "the children of this world" once the period of studies comes to an end.



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### A HERMENEUTIC INSTRUMENTALITY

Ignatius' letter to Coimbra is the first of a series of attempts to bring the situation in Portugal under control. Many more letters were necessary to accomplish this. The Portuguese crisis took, in total, six years to resolve. We know for a fact that Ignatius' words to the scholastics in Coimbra had a powerful effect on them.<sup>1</sup> But while the scholastics may have derived enormous consolation from his words, they did not desist from their behavior; less than a year later, alarmed by more reports, Ignatius sent another letter, outlining in greater detail the necessity and the advantages of obedience.<sup>2</sup> If Rodrigues' tolerance of the scholastics' behavior was partly to blame, his refusal to travel to Rome to discuss the situation could have only made things worse. Ignatius would have to wait until the early months of 1551, when he and the first contingent of Jesuits gathered in Rome to discuss the draft of the *Constitutions*, to finally have a word with his pupil. The conversation must not have done much to solve the problem, since shortly afterwards Rodrigues was stripped of his office and ordered to leave Portugal. He was replaced by Diego Mirón, whom the scholastics did not regard favorably. They professed allegiance to Rodrigues and resented his departure. A year later, a full-blown secession seemed to be under way. The situation was so critical that Ignatius had to appoint Miguel de Torres as an official visitor. Torres would spend two months in Portugal, interviewing every Jesuit in the province. Those who refused to declare themselves bound to Rome's authority were promptly dismissed.<sup>3</sup>

Though there is evidence that Ignatius held obedience in high regard from very early on, it was in the years leading up to the promulgation of the *Constitutions* that he began to think of it as the virtue that would set

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<sup>1</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, *Cartas*, ed. A. Cabré, M. Mir, and J. J. De la Torre (Madrid: Aguado, 1874).

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.*, 1:687–93. English translation in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, 199–203.

<sup>3</sup> See O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 330–1.

the Society's members apart from those of other religious orders.<sup>4</sup> The exhaustive review of monastic sources that Polanco conducted in preparation for the *Constitutions*, some of which contained extensive discussions of the significance and the merits of obedience, certainly accounts for this shift. However, one should also mention Ignatius' own experiences at the head of the Society. The kind of comprehensive vision of obedience that he would go on to articulate in his well-known Letter on Obedience, dispatched on 26 March 1553, owes as much to those sources that spoke eloquently about the need for obedience in the life of any religious community as it does to the practice of government instantiated in letters like the one he wrote to the scholastics in Coimbra. These letters served as the means of an administrative task consisting primarily, as is the case with any task of that kind, of concrete interventions in concrete problems. They present us, in a way, with the record of a prolonged and intricate test of the capacities, on the part of the sources at Ignatius' disposal, to respond to the contingencies arising in various outposts.

While many of these letters were addressed to the Jesuits in Portugal, the epistolary reflection on obedience also involved other outposts. Gandía, a coastal town in the outskirts of Valencia and the home of Francis Borgia, the Spanish nobleman who would eventually serve as the Society's third General Superior, is one of them. Several of the statements found in the Letter on Obedience can be found in the letters that were dispatched to that outpost in an effort to diffuse another crisis, similar in some respects to the one that rattled the Portuguese province, but ultimately rather different from it. I will focus on this other crisis later on. For the moment, I want simply to call attention to the existence of an epistolary corpus that tested the efficacy of previous statements on obedience for the solution of particular difficulties, in a way that set the stage for the kind of programmatic and synthetic pronouncements found in the Letter on Obedience and then, of course, in the *Constitutions*. Because Ignatius' letter to Coimbra, analyzed in the previous chapter, lies at the origin of this corpus, and because the letter is organized around the figure of the instrument, it is worth inquiring into the instrument's place within what Ignatius regards as two fundamental problems raised by obedience. The first of these problems concerns the gradual transition towards a

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<sup>4</sup> See the letter that Ignatius sent to Giovanni Batista Viola, who was then in Paris, on August of 1542. While a relatively early articulation of Ignatius' views on obedience, it anticipates many of the distinctive features of his position on the vow. *Ep.*, 1:228–9.

hierarchical mode of organization of the Jesuit community, something that insinuates itself in what Ignatius says about the need to obey one's superiors in the letter to Coimbra. The second problem concerns the continued interrogation of the conditions and the purpose of discernment and the systematic attempt to ground the hierarchical mode of organization on a hermeneutic norm.

The exchange with the scholastics in Coimbra corresponds to a transitional phase in the Society's government, one in which Ignatius is beginning to recede behind his appointed representatives. An indication of this transition appears towards the end of the letter, when Ignatius, apologizing for its length, claims that he might not have needed to elaborate so much since the scholastics "have people nearer to you with whom you can discuss these matters in detail."<sup>5</sup> He is alluding, of course, to Rodrigues, whom he had entrusted with the care of the Society's affairs in Portugal, and whom he had appointed as Provincial only a year before.

I have noted, however, that according to the reports that Ignatius received, Rodrigues' permissiveness was partly to blame for the crisis in Coimbra. Because Rodrigues was, if not encouraging, at least turning a blind eye to the scholastics' troubling behavior, Ignatius had every reason to be hesitant about his own claim that one should do only what has the consent of the spiritual director.<sup>6</sup> While in principle the scholastics are to obey Rodrigues, he has not proved to be someone whom they, or Ignatius, can trust. Thus it is that after writing that those in Coimbra would do well to discuss the matter with their superior, Ignatius voices his own hesitation to recede: "I could for this reason have left out some of what I have written," he declares before closing, "but since I write so seldom, I wanted this to be a long letter, and in this way console myself with you."<sup>7</sup>

In the end, Rodrigues' flawed leadership and the problems that arose from it were not enough to dissuade Ignatius from delegating authority to his appointed representatives. In fact, if someone needed to be persuaded of the wisdom of moving away from a model in which matters were referred to the General Superior as the only superior, it was often

<sup>5</sup> "más de cerca tendréys con quién conferirlas en particular." *Ep.*, 1:509.

<sup>6</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 330.

<sup>7</sup> "Y á la causa, aún se pudiera escusar parte de lo scrito; pero como lo hago tan pocas veces, he querido esta consolarme con vosotros, scriuiendo largo." *Ep.*, 1:509. Who is the real addressee of the letter: the scholastics under Rodrigues' tutelage or Rodrigues himself? For O'Malley, there can be no doubt that the letter to Coimbra contains "a veiled criticism of Rodrigues's permissiveness" (*The First Jesuits*, 330).

his fellow Jesuits, many of whom insisted on only obeying Ignatius. Efforts to divide the expanding Society into separate jurisdictions and to set up a mode of organization structured around representatives of the General Superior at different levels were by this point well under way.

Ignatius' efforts to persuade Jesuits of the benefits of this new model are on vivid display in a letter that he wrote to the Jesuits in Gandía on 29 July 1547.<sup>8</sup> only a few months after writing to Coimbra, Ignatius set out to convince the scholastics in the Spanish outpost to follow the example of their brothers in Padua and Louvain and to recognize the benefits of having "a superior by whom the others might be ruled and governed as they would be by the General Superior were he present."<sup>9</sup> Persuading those in Gandía that this provision was necessary to secure the overall health of the Society required Ignatius to outline the precedents and the reasons that had persuaded him of the wisdom of this move. Thus, in the opening section of the letter, Ignatius traces a genealogy that leads back from the founders of the first religious orders through the anchorites and the seven churches of Asia to the church in Jerusalem, before arriving at Christ and his disciples. All of these groups exemplify a principle that applies to religious and secular communities alike:

One of the many factors that influence me is the precedent given to us by all races, without exception, who live together in any kind of civil society, whether in kingdoms, cities, or particular groupings and houses within cities, and whether past or present. Government always tend to be concentrated in the one figure, a superior, so as to get rid of confusion and disorder and to keep the crowd in order. If we follow the general consensus of thinking people, this arrangement must certainly be considered the most appropriate, most natural and most fitting one.<sup>10</sup>

Once it has been argued, as was the case with the letter to Coimbra, that anything one does must have the superior's consent, it is only a matter of time before the need for superiors to obey and to implement this vision

<sup>8</sup> *Ep.*, 1:551–62. English translation in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, 182–194.

<sup>9</sup> "un superior, por quien se rijan y gouieren los otros, como por el prepósito general, si presente estuijesse." *Ep.*, 1:552.

<sup>10</sup> "vna de muchas cosas que me mueuen es el exemplo vniuersal, con que nos enseñan todas las gentes, que biuen en comunidad con alguna policía, que assí en los reynos como en las ciudades, y en las particulares congregaciones y casas dellas, assí en los tiempos pasados como presentes, comúnnmente se suele reducir el gouierno á vnidad de vn superior, para quitar la confusion y desorden, y bien regir la multitud. Pues sierto es que, en lo que comúnnamente todos los hombres de juicio y razón conuienen, aquello se deue creer sea lo más acertado, más natural y más conueniente." *Ep.*, 1:553.

imposes itself. Obedience is nothing if not obedience to a superior. Not everyone, of course, would be convinced by this circular argument, in which the existence of a superior is at once a presupposition and a necessary concomitant of obedience. Thus it is that, in his letter to Gandía, Ignatius tries the opposite approach. He argues for the legitimacy of the figure of the superior, and speaks of obedience as something that this figure makes possible.

Ignatius' discussion of the reasons that will persuade everyone that the government of individual outposts should be concentrated in one figure returns to a point he made in his letter to Coimbra, as he struggled to articulate his position on the ascetic pursuit of virtue. He had suggested there that obedience could be brought under the desire to die to oneself, and that those who wish to indulge in mortification might embrace this desire and its expression in the form of obedience as eagerly as they would embrace fasting, vigils, and penance. This sublimation of the desire to die to oneself proves central to the argument he develops in the letter to Gandía, which speaks of the obedience demanded by the superior as the most sublime kind of sacrifice. Obedience, which the letter defines as a renunciation of the freedom to judge in which direction the will must be inclined, is the most noble offering, not only because it is "the principal part of the human person" that one surrenders while obeying, but also because the offering does not consist of something material like "the fat of rams" (*adips arietum*, according to the quotation from the Book of Kings that Ignatius includes in the letter).<sup>11</sup> In obeying one's superior, one guards against making mistakes of one's own, overcomes temptations, and triumphs over oneself, in such a way as to enact a kind of martyrdom: "One is constantly being beheaded," Ignatius writes, "deprived of one's own will and judgment, and in their stead taking those of Christ as represented through his delegate."<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, in relieving one of the burden of having to steer one's life in the direction of beatitude, the way of life marked by continuous obedience gives "a powerful foretaste of the unburdening we will experience in our heavenly home, as it not only frees us from perplexity and doubt, but helps us also to get rid of the enormous

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<sup>11</sup> *Ep.*, 1:554.

<sup>12</sup> "continuamente corta la cabeza del proprio iuyzio y voluntad, poniendo en lugar de la suya la de Christo N.S., manifestada por su ministro." *Ep.*, 1:556.

weight of our own desires and care for ourselves, and to place these on the shoulders of the superior.”<sup>13</sup>

It is, of course, the need for *local* superiors that Ignatius is trying to establish. The recognition of the need for a superior *tout court* can be assumed to have already taken place, presupposed as it is by his capacity to address the scholastics in Gandía, and everyone else in the Society, as their General Superior. Would it not be possible, then, for the benefits of obedience to be made accessible by professing of obedience to Ignatius himself? Throughout the letter, what Ignatius proposes is supplemented with a qualification regarding distance. The superior being spoken of is a presence accessible to those around him without the mediation of a letter like the one through which Ignatius is speaking:

It is a great relief and source of calm... to have someone to obey near at hand. And not just a source of calm, for it ennobles and raises the status of a person enormously, as it causes him to be stripped of himself and clothed in God, the supreme good, who makes our minds and hearts expand in so far as He finds us empty of our own will.... Now someone might say that all these benefits could accrue to any individual who obeyed, in the Lord, the general Superior of the Society, but I am certain that they would be less, and very much less, than the benefits gained by those who live together as a religious group having someone nearby to obey out of obedience to Our Lord himself.<sup>14</sup>

The benefits to be derived from obedience, as it turns out, are not restricted to the spiritual growth of those who obey. Though he speaks of the individual’s spiritual ennoblement, what ends up prevailing in the letter to Gandía is the “relief” that obedience can bring, and not just from the enormous weight of one’s own desires and of the care for oneself. Having someone to obey near at hand can be a great relief for Jesuits in Gandía, but it is also relieves Ignatius from the duty of attending to those matters it would fall to him to attend to if he were the only superior that Jesuits obeyed. The local superior is the figure to which Ignatius himself

<sup>13</sup> “vn gran gusto del descanso de la patria, no solo librando de perplexidades y dudas, pero aun haciendo descargar á hombre del grauísimo peso de su propia voluntad y de la sollicitud de si mismo, poniéndola sobre el superior.” *Ep.*, 1:557.

<sup>14</sup> “Y así que es grande alivio y descanso... tener de cerca á quien obedecer: no solo hace descansar, pero ennoblec y grandemente eleua sobre su estado al hombre, haziéndole desnudar de sí y vestirse de Dios, summo bien, que hinche tanto nuestra ánima, quanto halla vacío de su propia voluntad.... Y aunque podría decir alguno que todo esto puede participar quien obedeciere in Domino al prepósito general de la Compañía, tengo por cierto que no tanto, con grande diferencia, como los que, viuendo en congregación, tienen de cerca á quien obedecer en el mismo Señor nuestro.” *Ibid.*

can entrust the task of attending to those particulars whose accumulation, as he himself suggests, represents an “enormous weight” for him to bear:

For anyone holding down my heavy responsibility, it is a great and appropriate relief, if not a necessity. For being required to and yet being unable to attend in detail to every single particular matter, he can at least hope to do so through others.<sup>15</sup>

The appointment of representatives and the institution of a way of life marked by obedience to them becomes here a means for a division of labor that should spare the General Superior an excessive administrative burden. The case for a way of life centered on obedience to a superior might be grounded in authoritative precedents and bolstered by intrinsic arguments like the one that holds the surrender of one's will and judgment to be the most noble offering, yet it also has definite bureaucratic advantages. This concern with procedural efficiency becomes apparent when Ignatius reflects on the way in which particular matters are managed. Thus it is that his letter comes to reflect on the epistolary medium itself:

For experience is now showing us that it is impossible to make provision from here for many important things. This is partly because one cannot write and let us know everything, since not everything can be confided in writing, and partly because often the time for making a decision runs out while people are asking our opinion here and we are sending a reply.<sup>16</sup>

Instead of individuals writing to and obeying the General Superior, they can consult someone near at hand. In theory at least, the local superior should render letters superfluous, at least those letters that concern matters that might be decided locally, with greater efficiency and with greater attention to immediate circumstances.

The exaltation of the figure of the superior is only one of the concerns of the letters that record Ignatius' evolving conception of obedience. These letters also seem very interested in interrogating the conditions and the purpose of discernment. Here, too, the letter to Coimbra proves exemplary. Recall how an initial outrage at the effects of discernment's

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<sup>15</sup> “Para quienquiera también, que tuviésses mi cargo y tanto peso, es gran alivio y muy deudido, antes necesario; porque siendo obligado, y no pudiendo attender por sí á todos los particulares, á lo menos lo haga por medio de otros.” *Ep.*, 1:558.

<sup>16</sup> “Porque ya nos muestra la experiencia, que de aquí es imposible proueer á muchas cosas que serían de importancia: parte, porque no se puede todo escreuir y hazérse saber acá, no se pudiendo fiar todas las cosas á escritura; parte, porque en muchas cosas se perdería la ocasión, en tanto que se pide parecer de acá y se embíá.” *Ibid.*

elusiveness was followed by the claim that it was in fact an excess rather than an absence of discernment that accounted for these effects. This discovery in turn made it possible to establish the absence of discernment not as a problem but as a desirable norm—the denunciation of the precious uniqueness of the *rara avis* was displaced by a plea for its migration back to the figure of the superior, to whom it legitimately belongs.

If the letter to Coimbra foreshadows the fate of discernment, it is in the way in which the outrage elicited by its absence gives way to a systematic effort to cast this absence into an imperative. This imperative becomes desirable to the extent that it reveals itself to be constitutive of the superior—the concentration of discernment in the superior is the form taken by the recognition of a representative power, and thus also the form taken by the basic differentiation between a superior and an inferior. We can understand what was at stake in this concentration by taking a closer look at a crisis that erupted in Gandía shortly after Ignatius wrote his letter asking the Jesuits stationed there to agree to live under a superior.

Ignatius' letter of 29 July 1547 was written approximately two years after the first contingent of Jesuits arrived in Gandía. The group, comprising five Jesuits, included two figures who would later prove decisive: Andrés Oviedo and Francisco Onfroy. A native of Toledo, Oviedo was regarded by his peers as a very spiritual person, and was noted both for his preaching and for his talent in guiding others through the *Exercises*. From the start he oversaw the foundation of the Jesuit college in Gandía, and was recognized also for his work among the *morisco* population. Later in his life he would lead the Society's mission to Ethiopia.<sup>17</sup>

Originally from Normandy, Onfroy spoke little Spanish, and was thought to have little talent for preaching. He had been ordained a priest in Valencia, and was one of the first teachers to work at the Jesuit college in Gandía, where he lectured in philosophy and theology. Two years after his arrival, he contracted tuberculosis, and was periodically visited by high fevers until his death in 1550.<sup>18</sup> Like Oviedo, he had come to Gandía from Coimbra, a fact worth keeping in mind as one considers the events soon to be discussed.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ruiz Jurado includes a biographical sketch of Oviedo and of Onfroy in “Un caso de profetismo reformista,” 225–28.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 225–6.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 225. The other three Jesuits (originally from Belgium, France, and Italy) had come from Rome.

A few months after Ignatius wrote to Gandía, and following the procedure he outlined at the letter's end, the Jesuits in the Spanish outpost elected Oviedo as their superior. The vote only made official what was already true in practice, since from the start it was Oviedo who had been in charge of the Jesuit house. Overseeing the group's pastoral work, however, was only one of the two tasks in which he found himself absorbed. Oviedo was also spending a significant amount of time with Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandía and former Viceroy of Catalonia. Borgia would eventually express interest in joining the Society, largely as a result of the conversations he was able to have with Oviedo. The admission into the Society of someone of Borgia's rank was of course no easy matter, and a year into the Jesuits' time in Gandía the preparations for it occupied most of Oviedo's time.<sup>20</sup>

In the later part of 1547, Borgia had to absent himself from Gandía on official business, leaving Oviedo free to rejoin his fellow Jesuits in their ministries. Judging by what Oviedo had written to Antonio Aráoz, the Spanish Provincial, about his dealings with Borgia before then, he should have been glad to do so, but the transition appears to have precipitated a crisis of sorts. Oviedo found himself questioning his fitness for ministry and longing for a period of reflection and silent contemplation.<sup>21</sup> He would eventually begin to retire periodically to a hermitage in the outskirts of Gandía, experimenting with fasts and vigils. Onfroy would join him on occasion, and both would devote long hours to prayer. When Borgia returned to Gandía in December of 1547, ready to join the Society, Oviedo intuited that his most important task was about to come to an end. By that point, he and Onfroy were spending close to eight hours a day in prayer. The Duke was finally admitted to the Society in February of the following year. A week later, on 8 February 1548, Oviedo wrote to Rome, asking license for him and Onfroy to withdraw to the desert for a period of seven years.

One has only to remember what less than a year before Ignatius had written to the scholastics in Coimbra to guess how he reacted to Oviedo's request. Ignatius was alarmed, and made it his immediate priority to dissuade Oviedo from this project. In late March, he asked Polanco to draft a response. Copies of it were attached to separate letters to Aráoz and to

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 237–8.

Borgia himself.<sup>22</sup> Ignatius was categorical. Under no circumstance were Oviedo and Onfroy to do as they wished. Their request for seven years of “retreat and solitude” (*recogimiento y solitud*) was denied, Polanco explains, “as the matter is a thorny one, and might set a dangerous example for the Society’s way of proceeding.”<sup>23</sup> In the letter to Aráoz, the matter was characterized in much stronger language: Oviedo’s request was “very much not in keeping with our institute and our way of proceeding.”<sup>24</sup>

Ignatius, however, objected not only to the content of the request. Polanco also writes of his annoyance at the lengths to which Oviedo had gone in his efforts to persuade Ignatius:

As regards the earnestness with which Your Reverence asks to be given the desired license, it seems to me that our Father regarded it to be of little use. For, were he to feel that the matter is to the greater service and glory of God, he would agree to it without much effort. If that were not so, no degree of earnestness, however great, would suffice. Speaking more generally, I have heard him say many times that the inferior must represent his motivations and open his heart to the superior without making too much effort to persuade him about what he feels or desires, as this is in many a signal that one’s own will and judgment prevail....<sup>25</sup>

The repudiation of the ascetic drive and the definition of the Society’s way of proceeding are thus only two of the aims of Polanco’s letter. For just as it codifies, in continuity with previous statements, how an inferior should present his reasons, the letter makes explicit Ignatius’ desire that in the future this codification serve as a model for requests made not to him, but to the official immediately above one. The argument that Polanco presents in favor of this provision takes up previous threads of Ignatius’ reflection on the demands of the Society’s administration, starting with his remarks on the need for a fair division of labor:

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<sup>22</sup> *Ep.*, 2:54–65. English translations are my own. The copies of this letter were dispached along with copies of Oviedo and Onfroy’s initial request.

<sup>23</sup> “por ser la cosa ardua y de peligroso exemplo para el modo de proceder de la Compañía.” *Ep.*, 2:56.

<sup>24</sup> “muy repugnante a nuestro instituto y modo de proceder.” *Ep.*, 2:53.

<sup>25</sup> “Quanto á la instantia grande, que V. R. vsa en pidir la licentia, he sentido que nuestro Padre la tenía por poco necesaria; porque, sintiendo su paternidad la cosa ser á mayor seruicio y gloria diuina, sin mucha fuerça viniera en ello: si tal no sintiesse, esa y otra mayor no bastaría. Y en general hablando, le he oydo más veces, que al inferior deve bastar representar sus motiuos y abrir sus entrañas al superior, sin esforzarse mucho de traherle á lo que él siente ó desea, porque esto en muchos suele ser señal que viue la propia voluntad y juicio.” *Ep.*, 2:56–7.

As the Society grows—as we have just said—so do our cares grow. And since it is not possible for one to attend to so many things, it is necessary that these cares be distributed, so that particular matters might be governed more satisfactorily, and so that the weight of whoever is in charge of this government be bearable, and bearable for an extended period of time. And because in every crowd it is necessary that there be order if confusion is to be avoided, given that there are a multitude of local superiors it is necessary that there be an order of subjection, for it is with that subjection that the union among them can be maintained, and along with that union the Society's being and good government.... In light of this, our Father earnestly desires in our Lord that in the Society we observe the due subordination among superiors according to rank, and that individuals appeal to and obey their local superiors in everything, and that local superiors obey their provincial, just as the provincial must obey the General Superior, and the General Superior the one whom God has given him as his superior. And so he truly wishes in our Lord that your Reverence appeal to master Aráoz for any matter you want to bring up, and that you obey him as you would obey Christ our Lord, since you have him in his place. Should master Aráoz have any doubts regarding the matter at stake, he shall write our Father master Ignatius, so that we may all help each other in our Lord.<sup>26</sup>

It is now clear that previous pronouncements on the need to live under a superior were setting the stage for the delineation of an arrangement like the one mentioned in the second half of the statement: Polanco's response to Oviedo contains one of the earliest schematizations of the Society's hierarchy as it will appear in future letters and eventually in the *Constitutions*. Just as the hierarchy gains definition, however, so does the characterization of the superior: Polanco writes that if it is indeed true that in all matters it is always better to rely on someone else's judgment, even if not necessarily on that of one's superior, "this is all the more true

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<sup>26</sup> "Mutuplicándose, como es dicho, la Compañía, es necesario se multiplique el cuidado; y no se sufriendo que vno pueda attender á tantas cosas, es necesario se reparta este cuidado, para que se pueda mejor satisfazer al gouierno de los particulares; y para que sea suffrible, y por el consiguiente durable, el peso á quien le lleua. Y porque en toda multitud es necesario aya orden para euitar confusión, vuiendo de auer multitud de prepósitos particulares, es necesario aya orden entre ellos de prelación y subiección, para que con la subordinación se mantenga la vnidad entre todos, y con ella el seer y buen gouierno de la Compañía.... Attendiendo todo esto, nuestro Padre mucho desea en el Señor nuestro, que en la Compañía se obserue la débita subordinación de unos superiores á otros, y que las personas priuatas en todo hagan recurso y obedientia á sus prepósitos particulares, y los particulares al prouincial, así como el prouincial debe hazerlo con el general, y el general con quien Dios le dió por superior. Y así encomienda mucho en el Señor nuestro a V. R., que en todas sus cosas recorra al licenciado Aráoz, y le obedesca como á Jesú Xo S. N., pues le tiene en su lugar. Quanto el Padre licenciado en alguna cosa tubiere duda, scriuirá á N. P. Mtro. Ignatio, y todos se ajudarán en el Señor nuestro." *Ep.*, 2:55–6.

regarding the judgment of the superior whom one has chosen to be ruled by in God's place, *as the interpreter of his divine will*. [como intérprete de la diuina vountad]."<sup>27</sup> What is most striking about this statement is the way in which the superior's mediation is linked to an act of interpretation. This is of course not without implications for the problematization of discernment that begins when obedience and the figure of the superior are first mentioned in the letter to Coimbra. As I suggested, that document proposes an expansion of the field of discernment as it is understood in the context of the *Exercises*. The reflection on the instrument's operativity that Ignatius undertakes there stages a passage from a predominantly *charismatic* understanding of discernment (a task that concerns the incidence of spirits) to one that is also possessed of an *ethical* valence, as we see when discernment comes to be linked with moderation—here it might be helpful to think of the Spanish word *discreción*, which can function as a synonym for prudence. What we see in Polanco's reply to Oviedo, concretely in his response to the protest against a neutralization of the ascetic drive, is a passage to a *hermeneutical* understanding of discernment: it is a question of establishing the superior, in his capacity as the one in charge of regulating extravagant expressions of the ascetic drive, as the legitimate *interpreter* of God's will. This hermeneutic inflection is crucial, and not only because it sheds light on the *function* ascribed to the superior in the wake of discernment's concentration in his figure. Beyond the reference to the *act* of interpretation, one must also be attentive to the act's *object*. Through the relation between the superior and the divine will discernment recovers a spiritual inflection that could seem to have been compromised with the passage to an ethical, as opposed to a charismatic, understanding of it. I will now show that, endowed with this hermeneutic specificity, the superior's authority can be expected to extend beyond the mere *specification* of God's will and that it will be affirmed, also, in the wake of the attempt, after Oviedo's request was denied, to challenge that specification. It is here that the superior's discernment and the authority that rests on it come face to face with the authority assigned to prophecy.

There is no reason to think that Oviedo was not being sincere when he assured Ignatius that he sought first and foremost to obey his wishes.

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<sup>27</sup> Ep., 2:61; my emphasis.

The sources suggest that he did conceive of Ignatius as the *intérprete de la diuina vontad*. When it was transmitted to him that he would not be permitted to retreat to his longed-for “desert,” he accepted the verdict in good faith. The same cannot be said about Onfroy or about another figure who would end up playing a key role in the crisis: Juan de Tejeda, a Franciscan who was a close friend of Borgia’s, and who had been a presence in the Society’s house since Oviedo and the other Jesuits arrived from Coimbra.<sup>28</sup> A little over a year after his initial request, Oviedo wrote to Ignatius to announce that Onfroy and Tejeda had experienced a series of prophetic ‘communications’ that suggested that more time spent in ascetic solitude would not only be beneficial for him personally. Both claimed that it had been revealed to them that, if he and all other Jesuits were to do that, the Society would be infused with new vitality. In Onfroy’s own words, the whole order was suffering from what he considered to be a “defective” foundation, one that did not allot enough time to prayer.

Ignatius had found Oviedo’s initial request unsettling, and proceeded to deny it in the belief that Oviedo was simply in need of reassurance about his vocation. The suggestion that the Society was effectively in need of reform, however, simply went too far, as did the attempt to bolster these claims by stating that it was God who had communicated this need. This last point is crucial, since it concerns what is effectively the articulation of a competing hermeneutic claim and a competing authority. One of the implications of Polanco’s claim that the superior is the legitimate interpreter of the divine will was that Ignatius, in denying Oviedo’s request, was transmitting God’s will regarding that project. If Onfroy and Tejeda’s experiences could challenge the results of Ignatius’ hermeneutic operation, it was because they, too, claimed to have access to this will. The prophecies transmitted to them implied that this will could make itself known other than through the superior.

Ignatius thought the matter was serious enough to assemble a committee to scrutinize each of the assertions included in Oviedo’s letter. The committee’s work culminated in a long report, drafted by Polanco and corrected by Ignatius before it was attached to a letter that Ignatius sent to Borgia on 27 July 1549.<sup>29</sup> Borgia had revealed himself by then to

<sup>28</sup> On Tejeda, see Ruiz Jurado, “Un caso de profetismo reformista,” 228–36.

<sup>29</sup> *Ep.*, 12:632–52. English translation in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, 210–29. Munitiz and Endean write that the report, even if it was Polanco who drafted it, “can justifiably be attributed to Ignatius himself, both because he whole-heartedly supported

be the only person in Gandía that Ignatius could trust to bring the crisis to an end. “I am absolutely convinced, without any doubt whatsoever, and declare openly before the tribunal of Christ our Creator and Lord, who one day is to judge me for ever, that these people have gone astray,” he wrote. He then asked Borgia to make sure that Oviedo and Onfroy understood that they were mistaken and to lead them back towards the path from which they had strayed. After communicating the results of the deliberations of the committee, Borgia was to make sure that the Jesuits in Gandía had no further contact with Tejeda. Not once during the crisis did Ignatius make any attempt to disguise his dislike of the Franciscan. Understandably, he interpreted the reference to prophecies as a sign of the influence of a member of an order that throughout its history had enthusiastically embraced the prophetic impulse—the report, indeed, makes repeated allusions to Joachim of Fiore, Savonarola, and the Franciscan spirituals.<sup>30</sup>

The report’s eleven extant folios are the record of an implacable exercise in discernment, one that begins by explaining why such an operation is necessary in the first place.<sup>31</sup> Future contingents that are prophetically communicated and conceivable, the report states, cannot to be unproblematically declared either impossible or fated to occur. They need to be authenticated by reference to the spirits responsible for them. This requires the special grace of the discernment of spirits, a task that in the case of prophetic communications begins with a scrutiny of a prophecy’s contents: any prophecy containing something contrary to “common sense, sound theology, and a healthy attitude towards life,” the report counsels, is to be rejected and even denounced publicly.<sup>32</sup> However, even those prophecies that do not offend this basic criterion and that demand to be “accepted in a spirit of reverence” require one to suspend judgment “and

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the findings of his committee and because he went carefully through Polanco’s text, toning down the harshness of some phrases and adding phrases of his own invention.” *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, 210.

<sup>30</sup> On Joachim of Fiore, see Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future: A Medieval Study in Historial Thinking* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999); *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 1–132; 393–507. On Savonarola, see the recent study by Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Ruiz Jurado refers to the report as “uno de los documentos doctrinales más preciosos en materia de discernimiento” (219).

<sup>32</sup> “la razón y sana doctrina y vida.” *Ep.*, 12:635.

to wait to see how things turn out before holding them to be certain.”<sup>33</sup> These general remarks about prophecies and their authentication set the stage for a meticulous evaluation of the cultural context of the prophecies and of the person and character of Onfroy himself. Thirty-two of the statements that Oviedo attributed to Onfroy are then subjected to a close reading, followed by an analysis of eight of Oviedo’s own statements. While the last folios of the report have been lost, and most certainly more than eight of Oviedo’s statements were subjected to the committee’s scrutiny, scholars agree that there could not have been many more.<sup>34</sup>

It is tempting to think of the prophetic communications mentioned by Oviedo as entertaining a relation to God’s will similar to the one claimed by Ignatius’ denial of his initial request. As a superior, Ignatius is the interpreter of God’s will. His denial expresses the outcome of this process of interpretation, which revealed the request to be not in accord with it. Compared with this process and the translation and authentication it involves, however, prophetic communications would in fact seem capable, given the kind of communication that they are, of claiming a greater immediacy with respect to God’s will. In the eyes of the committee this is, precisely, a deficiency. Its response underscores the need for a systematic authentication, which it falls to the interpreter to undertake. Onfroy’s challenge, in other words, ends up requiring a further intervention of the superior. In this way it becomes an opportunity for the one who has the power to discern the origin of the prophecies to assert his own authority. This is true even if the most cursory glance at Onfroy’s statements, and thus no special grace, suffices to expose their dubious nature: “It is true that as soon as we had read them,” we read, “our minds were quite spontaneously inclined to think ill of them, before considering any grounds at all.” The report then continues:

We felt great compassion at seeing such an attitude on the part of those responsible, whom we love intimately in Jesus Christ. But both truth and falsehood often move the understanding of their own accord, without any reasoning for or against. A person who thinks that God our Lord has imparted to us some grace for distinguishing between spirits might attribute this feeling of ours more to this gift than to other grounds.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “For even the prophets themselves,” the report explains, “do not always see everything in their prophetic light as clearly and without qualification as their expressions suggest.” *Ep.*, 12:634.

<sup>34</sup> Munitiz and Endean, *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, 397, n. 60.

<sup>35</sup> “teniendo mucha compassion por uer tal disposición en los autores dellas que amamos in visceribus Jesu Xpi. Porque la verdad y tanbién la falsedad muchas vezes de suyo

As we can see, the special grace of discernment is initially disavowed, ostensibly in a spirit of humility. Some might think it to be operative, but it is possible to explain the committee's assessment by reference to something else: a congenital reflex capable of spotting falsehood immediately. The whole passage seems intent on divesting the interpreter of any kind of special prerogatives and ultimately of the very charism initially declared to be "very appropriate and a matter of necessity" for the examination at stake.<sup>36</sup>

It appears that Onfroy's prophecies in fact went beyond the matter of the Society's reformation and that they also alluded to the need for the Church's own reformation, in the distinctly apocalyptic vein of those prophetic currents that spoke of the imminent arrival of an Angelic Pope.<sup>37</sup> The report articulates a position on these calls for reform by constructing a vivid and picturesque tableau of the enthusiasm for prophecy that had seized hold of Italy since the time of Savonarola. Famous cases like those of João da Silva e Menezes, Pietro Colonna, and Guillaume Postel alternate with stories of travelers proclaiming the need for the reformation of the Church and their imminent election as Popes. The report even mentions someone who, not long before, approached Ignatius and claimed that he had already been elected Pope, with Cardinal Farnese acting as a witness. If Onfroy's prophecies are to be mistrusted, we eventually learn, it is because they serve no clear good purpose—their contents are "harmful for the Society" and prone to bring "scandal to outsiders." But even if they were not, what is recorded in the tableau "would still render them suspect, deservedly so, and discourage one from getting mixed up in them."<sup>38</sup>

When examining why "good purposes" are expected to accompany prophetic communications, the report mentions the latter's status as "graces *gratis datae*."<sup>39</sup> Both Paul and the doctors of the Church claim that what marks such graces is that they are "for the good of others." This character-

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mueuen el entendimiento sin discursos algunos al assentir ó dissentir; y á quien pensase que Dios N. S. nos habría comunicado alguna gracia discernendi spiritus, á tal dón más que á otros motiuos se podría esto atribuir." *Ep.*, 12:635.

<sup>36</sup> *Ep.*, 12:633.

<sup>37</sup> Joachim of Fiore and his followers regarded this figure as the one in charge of inaugurating the so-called Age of the Spirit. Cf. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, 393–507. In line with their predictions, Onfroy suggested it might be none other than Borgia.

<sup>38</sup> *Ep.*, 12:638–9.

<sup>39</sup> *Ep.*, 12:639.

ization of the prophecies, as it turns out, is shared by what is required for their interpretation: not long before, we have read that God bestows upon those who set out to examine prophecies like those of Onfroy “a special grace, *gratis data*, ‘for the discernment of spirits.’”<sup>40</sup> It would not be misleading, indeed, to think of the report as staging a confrontation between these two graces, with discernment as the grace in charge of authenticating other instances of grace. Clearly this goes against the initial disavowal of the grace of discernment—against the claim that one can count on a spontaneous detection of falsehood. The report is aware of this, as we see when we read of how Aráoz and Ignatius agree in their condemnation of Onfroy’s statements: both the Spanish Provincial and the Society’s General Superior regard the prophecies as false. This should be enough to consider them as false, as it is safe to assume that superiors, whose task is to govern others, “are normally more strongly influenced by the gifts of God necessary for the government of those under their charge.” It is true that because their dedication to God is beyond dispute, it is only “reasonable” to rely on them: as the virtuous people everyone knows them to be their word should suffice. In the end, though, what is at stake in their position as virtuous rulers is the likelihood, precisely, of their being in possession of the gift necessary to interpret the prophecies: “Both in the case of the one and in that of the other, it seems that by a gift of Jesus Christ, the source of all that is good, they have the grace of discerning spirits. And it is much more appropriate and logical that they, rather than outsiders, have this gift in a particular way with regard to those under them.”<sup>41</sup> The reference to outsiders is of course an allusion to Tejeda. Their status as insiders, however, is as crucial as the fact that they have others under them. The argument the report advances rests on a circular logic: it is because Oviedo’s superiors are charged with governing him and others that they can be said to have the gift whose possession makes them fit to govern them. Instead of governing because they have certain gifts, starting with the gift of discernment, superiors are said to have the gift of discernment because they govern. Discernment is the superior’s prerogative, and those

<sup>40</sup> *Ep.*, 12:633. It is likely on the basis of this statement that Munitiz and Endean claim that the *Exercises*’ “Rules for the discernment of spirits” underlie the discernment process illustrated” in the report. Cf. *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, 210.

<sup>41</sup> “Que en el uno y el otro parece y es mucho más conueniente y razonable que tengan, por dón special de Jesucristo, auctor de todo lo bueno, esta gracia de discretion de spíritus cerca sus proprios súbditos que otros de fuera.” *Ep.*, 12:638. This is one of the passages that Ignatius underlined with his own hand.

judgments informed by it, together with their interpretation of communications, are to be regarded with the reverence that this grace commands.

The report is unequivocal in its portrayal of the etiology of Onfroy's mental disarray. It traces it back to an unrestrained ascetic drive. In insisting on the urgency of retreating to the desert along with Oviedo, and then in challenging Ignatius' denial of this request with prophetic assurances that doing so would be beneficial for the two men, for the Society, and for the Church, Onfroy has revealed himself to be guilty of an obstinacy originating in "extended and disorderly" mortification. An outlook aligned with the philosophy of *contemptus mundi*, however, is also to blame: "Quite naturally the more one cuts oneself off from material things, the more the understanding becomes inflexible regarding what one apprehends as true or false."<sup>42</sup> One of Onfroy's most troubling accusations was that the Society had grown in numbers but had diminished in spirit.<sup>43</sup> Its members, he believed, were too immersed in the world. More time praying was one of the ways in which to remedy the spiritual deficiencies he saw. Jesuits prayed too little, Onfroy argued, and for too short a period of time, partly because of the limits that Ignatius had set upon those who wished to pray for longer stretches. That was the case with Oviedo and with Onfroy himself. Oviedo's letter made it clear that, in his opinion, the eight hours they spent praying should be the norm.

In response, the report states that Ignatius posed no such limits and that to think that only a prayer that extends itself for such a stretch of time is genuine goes against the magisterium:

The idea that prayer for one or two hours is not real prayer, and that more hours are necessary, is bad theology and goes against the intuitions and practice of the saints. We see this firstly through the example of Christ: although he sometimes spent the whole night in prayer, at other times he was not so long, such as in the prayer at the Last Supper, or the three times he prayed in the Garden.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> "que naturalmente, cuanto más se aparta la creatura racional de las cosas materiales, su entendimiento se haze más stable en lo que aprehende vero ó falso." *Ep.*, 12:640.

<sup>43</sup> *Ep.*, 12:644.

<sup>44</sup> "Que oración de vna y dos horas no es oración, y que son menestar más horas, es mala doctrina, contra lo que han sentido y practicado los santos: P.o Veyese por exemplo de X.o, que aunque á veces aya pernoctado in oratione, otras no estaua tanto, como en la oración de la cena, y las 3 que oró en el huerto." *Ep.*, 12:651.

There are also the prayers Christ taught, the prayers recited by anchorites, the prayers contained in breviaries, the prayers performed by devout believers, and the exclamatory prayers of Augustine. None of them takes the time Onfroy wants prayer to take, and yet they are all real prayers. Without a doubt, in the eyes of the committee, the eight hours Onfroy and Oviedo were pushing for seemed fated to result in an even greater “inflexibility” with regard to the apprehension of the truth.

Onfroy’s diminished faculties and his stubbornness are two indications of an impairment that, evoking previous discussions of the ascetic drive, the report characterizes in terms of damage:

Just as his inappropriate physical and mental activities leave him with a *damaged* body—as we gather from the reports reaching us of his spitting blood and other ailments—so I fear from other obvious signs that the seat of his imaginative faculty has been *impaired*. Moreover, his thinking and evaluative powers have been *damaged*, those powers by which one judges particular issues, sorting out the true from the false and the good from the bad. If this sense is *in bad condition*, it is quite normal for delirium to occur.<sup>45</sup>

Onfroy was sick with tuberculosis. He died shortly after the report reached Gandía, sparing Borgia and Aráoz an intensification of the crisis. His spitting blood might thus have had little to do with his “extended and disorderly” exercises. His symptoms, however, could be easily incorporated into a vision of bodily ruin that evokes and expands upon Ignatius’ discussion, in the letter to Coimbra, of the damage that ascetic practices can inflict. Crucially, though, the damage here extends beyond bodily ruin, since prophecy implicates the imagination and the understanding. If Onfroy’s communications are to be rejected it must be presupposed that these, too, have been impaired. Discussing Onfroy’s mental state, the report insists on the greater adaptability to the gift of prophecy, and thus on the greater worthiness, of a “clear and discriminating mind [*entendimiento claro y distinto*].” This kind of mind, we read, would be “capable of distinguishing within the illumination what was absolute from what was conditional, and what was known through natural light from what was known through

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<sup>45</sup> “como con indiscretos exerçios corporales y mentales tiene mal tratado su cuerpo (que acá entendemos díl echar sangre por la bocca y otras indisposiciones), así temo y parce claro verlo, que tiene estragado el órgano de la imaginación y dañada la estimativa ó cogitativa, en quien está el juicio de los particulares, para discernir en ellos lo verdadero de lo falso y lo bueno de lo malo; y de la mala disposición de esta cogitativa suele proceder el delyrar.” *Ep.*, 12:641; my emphasis.

prophetic light.”<sup>46</sup> Such a capacity is lacking in Onfroy—although according to the logic laid out above, this lack should not in itself be problematic, since the capacity is a gift that only those above him should exercise. This lack is, precisely, what makes it possible for the document that denounces it to itself stage this capacity. When the time comes to analyze the various propositions Oviedo and Onfroy have put forth, it is the distinctions named above (between the absolute and the conditional, and between prophetic and natural light) that will give the hermeneutic task a methodological coherence. Once again, we encounter, in relation to discernment, that seemingly contradictory operation that transmutes an initially negative lack into a desirable absence.

Scholars are right to suggest that the crisis in Gandía would determine the place that prophecy might have within the Society.<sup>47</sup> Its impact on the question of the distribution and allocation of discernment, however, is equally significant. Prophetic communications are cause for unease not only because, as is the case with Onfroy’s statements and with those that the report cites in its depiction of the prophetic enthusiasm sweeping through Rome, they announce the eventual demise of a particular order of things. The very event of prophecy, regardless of its contents, is in itself significant, provided one focuses on its allocation of a voice—not for nothing is prophecy aligned with an “irrepressible spontaneity” and a “democratic” impetus.<sup>48</sup> Prophecy confronted the committee with the possibility of a dispersion of authority, and this suffices to understand what is at stake in the report’s position on discernment. The committee’s response to events in Gandía invokes, as a kind of absolute rule, the principle of *unilocatio*: regardless of whether the spirit of prophecy spoke truthfully in Gandía—and, according to the committee, there is every indication that it did not—the capacity to discern this truth cannot be located in the one who speaks the statement. Through its allocation of discernment in those invested with greater authority and possessed of a higher rank, the report restores the basic difference that prophecy itself could seem to have suspended. We return, with this, to the dialectical relation that

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<sup>46</sup> “lo que se muestra como absoluto ó como conditionante, y saber distinguir lo que sabe en la lumbre natural y lo que en la prophética, porque confundiéndose, se tomaría fácilmente uno por otro.” *Ep.*, 12:640.

<sup>47</sup> This is, in essence, Ruiz Jurado’s argument.

<sup>48</sup> On this point, see Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 21–2.

obtains between the two questions at the heart of Ignatius' reflection on obedience. The exaltation of the superior as a legitimate representative proves to rest on a particular allocation of discernment. In this way, this allocation comes to lie at the origin of the hierarchical arrangement that corresponds to the exaltation of the superior. If the committee's report furnishes us with a definitive position on discernment, it also announces the consolidation of this arrangement.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### A COMMUNITY OF INSTRUMENTS?

I began my analysis of Ignatius' critique of ascetic ideals with an exploration of the understanding of asceticism that informs his letter to the scholastics in Coimbra. I then proceeded to consider Ignatius' efforts to articulate the definition of discernment that would provide the basis for the hierarchical arrangement of the different Jesuit communities. My discussion of these efforts treated them as developments of what is already outlined in the letter to Coimbra—the assumption, which I now state explicitly, was that everything that Ignatius has to say about the superior's claim on discernment and about the importance of living under a superior can be traced back to that document.

Now, my reading of the letter to Coimbra showed that everything that Ignatius has to say about discernment aims, in the end, to secure the instrument's operativity: Ignatius insists on the need for the superior to stake his rightful claim on discernment because he believes that to be the best way of preventing the instrument from being damaged—as it might be if it takes it upon itself to decide what it should do. If what Ignatius has to say about discernment can be traced back to the letter to Coimbra, then it is possible to assume that his insistence on the need for Jesuits to live under a superior—a need that follows from his definition of discernment—is also concerned with securing the instrument's operativity: hierarchy, too, is in the service of the instrument.

I remark on this point in preparation for a discussion, precisely, of the relation between the metaphor of the instrument and the process culminating in the consolidation of a hierarchical arrangement for the whole Society. Ignatius' exhaustive reflection on obedience, starting with the letter to Coimbra and culminating in his famous letter of 26 March 1553, will prove crucial to this discussion. But so will the metaphor that is meant to give expression to the hierarchical ideal, and to the unity that hierarchy is considered capable of bringing about. I am referring here to the metaphor of the body.

I noted just now that hierarchy as Ignatius speaks of it would seem to be in the service of the instrument. In the end, though, the very opposite might be the case. What functions at one specific juncture as a way of

securing the instrument's operativity might, in its development, pose a challenge to the central presuppositions of the instrumental paradigm. The same hierarchical destiny that seems to be in the service of the instrument, in other words, might end up working against it. The reason for this opposition lies in a threat as serious as, if not more serious than, the one posed by the ascetic drive. What distinguishes this threat is the fact that it originates, unlike the one associated with the ascetic drive, in the operative instrument. At stake here is that dispersion which, as I suggested in my discussion of the commitment to instruction, the instrument itself posits as the condition of its efficacy. What makes it threatening should not be hard to identify. It is the fact that it is bound up with the possibility of the disintegration of the community of instruments.

In his first letter to Gandía, Ignatius had reflected on the advantages of a daily practice of obedience, the kind of practice that is only possible in the presence of a superior. What he had to say there reflects a consciousness of the Society's uniqueness: this practice is necessary, he suggests, not only in light of the fact that among Jesuits there are many who are very learned and influential—two things that might make them resistant to taking orders—but also because the Society includes “people who are in mission from the Pope or from other Church dignitaries” and who are therefore “scattered in places far away from where the General Superior lives.”<sup>1</sup>

If the instruments are truly committed to continuously extend their action towards others, they cannot expect to be present to one another—the fact that Jesuits are “scattered in places far away” is in and of itself an indication of their efficacy as instruments. Ignatius and those around him seem to have understood, however, that this dispersion could end up compromising what, in the same letter to Gandía, Ignatius refers to, for the first time, as “the body of the Society [*el cuerpo de la Compañía*.”<sup>2</sup> That the union between Jesuits could suffer in light of the dispersion of its members is something that the *Constitutions* themselves will recognize. They do so, I should note here, in the very terms in which the problem of union is formulated, as a problem touching on the imagination of a body:

The more difficult it is for the members of this congregation to be united with their head and among themselves, since they are so scattered among the faithful and the unbelievers in diverse parts of the world, the more ought

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<sup>1</sup> *Ep.*, 1:559.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.*, 1:558.

means to be sought for that union. For the Society cannot be preserved, or governed, or, consequently, attain the end it seeks for the greater glory of God unless its members are united among themselves and with their head.<sup>3</sup>

In my introduction to this study, I claimed that the metaphor of the instrument is one of the metaphors through which the Society sought to represent to itself key aspects of its own existence. It seemed important to insist then that the ‘social imaginary’ of the Society of Jesus, the symbolic field comprising the entire set of such metaphors, is a diverse reality and that the metaphor of the instrument exists alongside other metaphors—the metaphor of the Lord’s vineyard (a designation for the Church understood in its pastoral rather than in its hierarchical guise, as a community concerned primarily with the *cura animarum*) is one that comes to mind in this connection.<sup>4</sup> The passage quoted above shows that this imaginary also includes the metaphor of the body. As is well known, this is a metaphor that, following the example set by Aristotle in the opening of the *Politics*, would prove central to any reflection on the constitution of political communities.<sup>5</sup> The *Constitutions* would seem to be engaged in a similar reflection, but in their case it seems pertinent to refer to the uses of the metaphor of the body in discussions of the nature and the structure of the Church, starting with Paul’s conception of the Church as the body of Christ. We know that this conception was central to Paul’s attempt to solve the eschatological conundrum of primitive Christianity, which saw Christ’s second coming delayed beyond the initial expectations of the first Christians. Paul needed to reassure those who feared that their death would not allow them to participate in this event, and so he proclaimed baptism’s power to incorporate Christians into a body that would rise with Christ’s return. In so doing, he set the stage for a conception of the Church as an organic whole that recognizes, in Christ, the head and the spirit that infuses it.

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<sup>3</sup> “Quanto es más difícil unirse los miembros desta Congregación con su cabeza y entre sí, por ser tan esparcidos en diversas partes del mundo entre fieles e infieles; tanto más se deben buscar las ayudas para ello; pues ni conservarse puede ni regirse, ni por consiguiente conseguir el fin que pretende la Compañía a mayor gloria divina, sin estar entre sí y con su cabeza unidos los miembros de ella.” *Cons.*, 655.

<sup>4</sup> O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 298.

<sup>5</sup> The metaphor of the body as a representation of a political community appears first, in fact, in Plato’s *Republic* and *Laws*. In terms of the history of political thought, however, its appearance in Aristotle’s *Politics* would prove more decisive.

Like the metaphor of the instrument, the metaphor of the body is inscribed within a long and complex genealogy, one that begins with Paul's argument and ends with those definitions of the Church as the mystical body (*corpus mysticum*) of Christ.<sup>6</sup> The analysis of this genealogy and of what it might reveal about the use that the *Constitutions* makes of this metaphor, however, is beyond the scope of this study, whose focus is on the metaphor of the instrument. In any case, a genealogical analysis the metaphor of the body is not necessary, however, to understand the tension that results from the encounter between the two metaphors, which is what interests me in what follows. Simply to recall the metaphor's age-old associations with the unity that the different members of a community aspire to constitute should be enough. The dispersion on which the instrument's efficacy is premised clearly implies a challenge to this unity. Can there be a community of instruments? That is the question that the *Constitutions* will confront.

Before I analyze how they do so, however, let me remark on the fact that the twofold status of dispersion—at once an imperative and a threat—was brought home early on, as soon as Pope Paul III began to dispatch the first Jesuits on different missions. Committed to the apostolic ideal outlined in the *Exercises*, Ignatius and his companions were nevertheless concerned about the potential disintegration of a fellowship whose members were *enviados por todo el mundo* in order to spread Christ's *sagrada doctrina*.<sup>7</sup> Thus it was that in May of 1539 they decided to elect a superior. Historians of the Society view this decision as a solution to the problem of dispersion, backed by a series of documents from that year that speak of this step as beneficial for the Society's "conservation."<sup>8</sup> In making this decision, however, the first Jesuits were officially constituting themselves as a religious order, with all that such a status entails. This might have gone against their own conceptions of the "charismatic" nature of their

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Henri de Lubac's magisterial and now classic study, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> In his commentary to the *Constitutions*, Aldama writes that it did not take long for the first Jesuits to understand that their own dissemination throughout the world would end up compromising the integrity of their fellowship. Committed to assisting the Pope wherever he saw fit to send them, Aldama writes, they were left with no other choice than to "formalize" their existence. Antonio M. De Aldama, *Introductory Commentary on the Constitutions*, trans. A. J. Owen (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1989), 265.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Pierre Blet, "Les Fondements de l'obéissance ignatienne," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 25 (1956): 515.

fellowship, but they still deemed it necessary if they wanted to see the group survive the challenges that distance would impose.

The reasons for this are evident the passage from the *Constitutions* that I quoted above, where we read about the difficulty of uniting the members of the body with their head and among themselves. Clearly, the election of a General Superior *instituted* a fundamental difference between a head and the rest of the group's members. It *posited* a body, even if in the form of something whose unity is difficult to attain. This is a simple but extremely significant gesture, as it is only after the body is posited that the unity that is essential to it can emerge as something to be attained, precisely what the *Constitutions* declare it to be right after the passage quoted above.

Before that, however, the *Constitutions* point out that the conditions in which the body's unity seems problematic are not the only conditions to be contemplated. The scenario in which Jesuits are scattered far and wide might be the ideal that the Society should strive for, but that is not to say that there are not other scenarios. Indeed, the *Constitutions'* discussion of the body's unity begins by considering what is meant to be an exception: the interlude in which the instruments, heretofore scattered far and wide, are present to one another, confined within a delimited space that can give this presence the quality of a certifiable fact of experience. Known, in the *Constitutions*, by the name of *unión personal*, this modality of union is aligned, as far as the rhetoric surrounding its description is concerned, with the monastic *congregatio*. Its treatment is indeed another site in which to trace the relation between the Society and its predecessors.

Unlike previous religious orders, the Society did not require its members to reserve specific times for prayer and for the recitation of hours.<sup>9</sup> This exemption would turn out to be a crucial point of contention between the Society's supporters and detractors in the Roman curia, with those in favor of its recognition arguing that such a requirement would interfere with the Jesuits' pastoral commitments. This principle, central to the conception of the daily life of the individual Jesuit, is reflected at the level of the whole Society in the debate surrounding general congregations, which are more or less the equivalent of the mendicant chapters.<sup>10</sup> Just as on a day-to-day basis Jesuits were not expected to return to their houses at fixed

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<sup>9</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 35.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 53.

times, they were also not expected to return to Rome at regular intervals. That would be at odds with the belief that the Society was instituted so that its members could *discurrir por el mundo*.

General congregations are what the *Constitutions* have in mind when they speak of the modality of union known by the name of *unión personal*, and what they have to say about it attests to a preoccupation with what such congregations mean, both for the efficacy of the instruments of which the order is composed and for the outcome of the work in which they are implicated. They devote a large section of their eighth part to specifying who must congregate, why and at whose request, “as well as the place, time, and mode” of such congregations. Crucially, right from the start they refer to these congregations as exceptions to the normal course of events: “It is presupposed,” we read, “that for the present it does not seem good in God our Lord that a congregation be held either at definite intervals or very often.” The Society’s General Superior should seek to “spare” the Society what is ultimately an onerous “care” (*trabajo*) and “distraction” (*distracción*). This is not to say that congregations can be entirely dispensed with. However inconvenient they might seem, there are certain cases for which one must make a concession. First among such cases, indeed, is “the election of a new General, be it because of the death of the previous one or for any of the other causes for which the post can be vacated.”<sup>11</sup> Delicate matters such as the transfer of houses and colleges may warrant calling a congregation, but the death of the General remains the chief circumstance in which it is impossible for the Society not to concede to a restriction not only of the space through which its members are scattered, but also of the spectrum of its activities.<sup>12</sup>

The procedure for this election is laid out in detail shortly after. First, the Vicar whom the General appointed as his temporary successor before his death exhorts those who have returned to Rome to make a choice that will further the Society’s mission and well-being. Members have three days to pray and carefully consider their decision; on the fourth day, they are expected to gather in the conclave, “in such a way as to be unable to

<sup>11</sup> *Cons.*, 677.

<sup>12</sup> Consider, in this context, how a work that formerly comprised within itself a wide variety of tasks is displaced by one that aims, almost exclusively, at the election of a successor. Interestingly, the *Constitutions* stipulate that not all members need to gather in Rome, and that some provinces might be exempted. This provides further indication of the unease regarding congregations and the distraction they represent, as if even in those cases in which this distraction is necessary and unavoidable it should never be total. Cf. *Cons.*, 682.

leave." Until they have unanimously agreed on a successor, the *Constitutions* indicate, they are not allowed to feed themselves on "anything other than bread and water."<sup>13</sup> If there is no such unanimous accord, they must write the name of their candidate on a piece of paper and approach a table where the Vicar, aided by a secretary and an assistant, will receive and count the votes. Only in the absence of a majority should the congregation appoint no more than five electors, entrusting them with the choice that the congregation has not been able to make.<sup>14</sup> In all of its three modalities, however, members must strive to expedite the process. The rigorous dietary restrictions mentioned above are in fact nothing but a way of ensuring that their cloisterly seclusion does not extend for very long.<sup>15</sup>

Comprising three distinct modes, this election recalls the one at the heart of the *Exercises*, which also unfolds according to three modes. The congregation discussed in the *Constitutions* might in fact be an event that occupies, in relation to the life of the Society, a position analogous to the practice of the *Exercises* in the life of the Jesuit. The leader's death elicits a 'retreat' of sorts, with the conclave acting like the space to which the exercitant withdraws. But in this case what retreats are those instruments that were heretofore scattered in *diversas partes del mundo*. The correlation I am trying to establish here—at once between the two elections, and between the congregation and the *Exercises*—is important in that it underscores another dimension of the Society's debt to its founding text. The *Exercises*, as I have been arguing, must be regarded as the source of the concern with providence that will determine how the group represents its own program of action to itself. They have also been seen as a common possession and as a shared experience that could secure a sense of community and of identity among the Jesuits

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<sup>13</sup> *Cons.*, 698.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed explanation of the three modes, see *Cons.*, 697–708. For a comprehensive discussion of the general congregations, including records of the decrees, see John W. Padberg, ed., *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations*, trans. Martin D. O'Keefe (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> The anxiety that surrounds general congregations makes itself felt beyond the *Constitutions*. Aldama himself evokes it in his commentary, referring to personal union as "the meeting together of the dispersed, which cannot be constant or permanent and which has no place in the Society except rarely and for serious reasons." Why such a relation to a *lugar particular* can have no place in the Society is explained, predictably, by reference to the Society's commitments: Aldama points out that, if the general congregation is something "from which the Society must be spared as far as possible," it is because "effectively it 'distracts' the Society, depriving it of the time and attention which . . . it ought to give to the apostolic ministry" (*Introductory Commentary*, 278–9).

scattered throughout the world. One could even say, perhaps, that the variegated and anarchic nature of the text offers an image of the Society as it expanded and thus of the scenario that would in turn make the common possession and the shared experience of the *Exercises* useful. The techniques of discernment instilled in the course of their practice, after all, would come in handy in the unpredictable scenarios to which Jesuits were exposed, especially when quick action was essential. To establish a correlation between the congregation and the practice of the *Exercises*, however, is to suggest that, as is the case with the individual, the Society as a whole finds itself implicated, periodically, in the restoration of an interrupted operativity. Just as we can speak, in the case of the individual and the practice of the *Exercises*, of an interlude of damage to be transcended, so do we find in the congregation an interlude of damage that the Society as a whole is asked to transcend.

This assimilation of the congregation to a scenario of damage is not arbitrary, a product simply of the correlation between the two elections. The *Constitutions* might insist that a general congregation corresponds to one of the instantiations of that body that epitomizes the ideal of union, but it is clearly questionable whether it is legitimate to speak, in light of the absence of a head, of a body whose head and members are firmly united. On an intuitive level, what the *Constitutions* call *unión personal* seems likely to foster a sense of union, resting as it does on a confinement of the Society's members in a space in which they can be present to one another. But it is clear at the same time that this modality of union is afflicted by the absence of the central element of the body. The early history of the Society indicates that the decision to posit a body—the decision, on the part of the first Jesuits, to live under a superior—was animated by the fear that the group's unity would be threatened by the dispersion of its constituents. Dispersion, however, might in the end be the scenario in which the body can be sure of its own preservation—even if its unity is a problem—to the extent that it implies that a head is in existence. With the election of a head—an election that, to continue with the analogy with the *Exercises*, falls under the “immutable” kind, since after the proclamation of the new leader “no one may change their opinion, nor decide on someone else having already done so”—the body's members can return to their commitments.<sup>16</sup> In this way, a new scenario

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<sup>16</sup> *Cons.*, 709.

takes effect, the kind of scenario in which, in accordance with their commitment to instruction, the instruments proceed to scatter far and wide.

The *Constitutions* speak at length of the body that exists in a state of dispersion, a body held together by what, in opposition to *unión personal*, they call *unión de ánimos*. Because what characterizes this union is the absence of a reference to what the *Constitutions* call a *lugar particular*, such as the conclave, it is safe to say that it is the kind of union that corresponds to the group's recognition of the entire world as the expanse of its *discurrir*.<sup>17</sup>

Compelled to specify how such a union is to be secured, the *Constitutions* begin by assigning a central place to God's love: "On both sides," we read, "the principal bond behind the union of the members among themselves and with the head is the love of God our Lord."<sup>18</sup> The assumption here is that if the head and the members are each closely united with God through his love, "they will very easily be united among themselves."<sup>19</sup> Shortly afterwards, however, the *Constitutions* turn to obedience, and go so far as to claim that *unión de ánimos* "is produced in large measure by the bond of obedience." Thus, of those who "are sent forth out of the Society's houses to work in the Lord's vineyard," it is asked that they be proficient in this virtue, "remaining united with their superior and obeying him promptly, humbly, and devoutly [*pronta y humilde y devotamente obedeciéndole*]."<sup>20</sup> Both the contents and the range of the hierarchical

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<sup>17</sup> Commenting on the name chosen by Ignatius in order to designate this kind of union, Aldama writes that "the word *ánimo*, corresponding to the Latin *animus*, means the principle and seat of thoughts and feelings." Accordingly, he translates *unión de ánimos* as "union of hearts and minds," thus placing the accent on a certain uniformity of feeling and intention and on a set of shared goals. Aldama, *Introductory Commentary on the Constitutions*, 266. Following the typology presupposed by discussions of the unity of the Church in the period of the Society's consolidation, *unión de ánimos* would thus seem to combine attributes of what was known as "unity of conformity," understood as a sharing in the gifts of grace, and "unity of attribution," which consists in the participation in a common aim. Both support a "unity of totality" concerned, as its name indicates, with the relation between members and the whole that they constitute. For the threefold typology of union, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Vol. 4: *Reformation of Church and Dogma* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1985), 72. James of Viterbo's *De regimine christiano* and Alvaro Pelayo's *De planctu ecclesiae* are among the examples that Pelikan cites.

<sup>18</sup> "El vínculo principal de entradas partes para la unión de los miembros entre sí y con la cabeza, es el amor de Dios nuestro Señor." *Cons.*, 671.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Cons.*, 659.

arrangement that crystallizes with this reference to obedience become explicit shortly after:

This same virtue of obedience comprises the properly observed subordination of the superiors, one to another, and of the subjects to the superiors, in such wise that the individuals living in some house or college have recourse to their local superior or rector and are governed by him in every respect. Those who are distributed throughout the province refer to the provincial or some other local superior who is closer, according to the orders they received. And all the local superiors or rectors should communicate often with the provincial and thus, too, be directed by him in everything. And the provincials in their turn will deal in the same way with the general. For this subordination, when well observed in this manner, will preserve the union which is attained chiefly through it, with the help of the grace of God our Lord.<sup>21</sup>

Aldama remarks that what the *Constitutions* call *oboedientiae vinculum* can only provide the foundation for a “social” kind of union, not to be confused with what, echoing the Pauline rhetoric that suffuses the text of the *Constitutions*, he refers to as a “union in Christ,” a union whose foundation is not found in obedience, but in *caritas*.<sup>22</sup> Aldama’s distinction is pertinent. It serves as confirmation that there is a dimension of the metaphor of the body that must be understood in Pauline terms. There is, however, little indication that, as he suggests, the *Constitutions* view the two virtues as equals or that, as with the case of the *corpus mysticum* of the Church, there is a complementarity between hierarchy and *pneuma*. A statement included in the tenth part of the text (“On How the Whole Body of the Society Can Be Preserved and Developed in its Well-Being”) in fact shows obedience to displace *caritas*:

Whatever helps towards the union of the members of the Society among themselves and with their head will also help much to preserve the well-being of the Society, as is especially the case with the bond among wills, which consists of charity and the love between members and the head, and which is

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<sup>21</sup> “A la misma virtud de la obediencia toca la subordenación bien guardada de unos Superiores para con otros, y de los inferiores para con ellos; en manera que los particulares que están en alguna Casa o Colegio, hagan recurso a su Préposito local o Rector, y se rijan por él en todas las cosas; los que estén esparcidos por la Provincia, recurran al Provincial, o a algún otro local más vecino, según les fuere ordenado. Y todos los Prepósitos locales o Rectores se comuniquen mucho con el Provincial, y así mismo se rijan por él en todo. Y de la misma manera se habrán los Provinciales con el General. Porque así guardada la subordenación, mantendrá la unión que muy principalmente en ella consiste, mediante la gracia de Dios nuestro Señor.” *Cons.*, 662.

<sup>22</sup> Aldama, *Introductory Commentary on the Constitutions*, 267–75.

strengthened by their getting information and news from one another and by communicating frequently with one another, as well as by following the same doctrine and by being uniform in everything as far as possible, *and above all by the bond of obedience*, which unites the individuals with their superiors, and the local superiors among themselves and with the provincials, and both the local superiors and provincials with the General, in such a way that the subordination of some to others is diligently preserved.<sup>23</sup>

In order to claim that its constituents are efficacious instruments of the divinity, the community must embrace a scenario of dispersion that, in and of itself, poses a challenge to its unity and to its very status as a community. In my reading of the *Constitutions*, I have sought to call attention to this paradox, which in fact reflects a basic tension between the union of the divine hand and the instrument, on the one hand, and the union among these instruments themselves, on the other. Another way of approaching this tension would be to speak of the conflicting aspirations condensed, respectively, in the metaphor of the instrument and in the hierarchical ideal. This conflict might seem surprising in light of the fact that, initially at least, obedience is said to serve the instrument: obedience, as we saw, makes an appearance in the letter to Coimbra in order to avert a scenario of damage. As I showed, though, at the moment when this damage is averted and the instrument's effective mobilization seems to be secured, a new threat comes to the fore: that of the group's disintegration as a result of the scattering of the instruments that constitute it. To the extent that it makes it possible for the instrument to be mobilized, obedience can be said to lie behind this threat. It might thus seem contradictory that its very neutralization should be assigned to obedience, the *vinculum* that binds the body in which, according to the *Constitutions*, the community finds an ideal of unity.

In the end, this provides us only with an intimation of the way in which obedience and instrumentality can be said to diverge, even if initially they seem to be closely aligned. For the divergence to come to the fore, we must return to what the *Constitutions* have to say about

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<sup>23</sup> "Lo que ayuda para la unión de los mimebros desta Compañía entre sí y con su cabeza, mucho también ayudará para conservar el buen ser della, como es especialmente el vínculo de las voluntades, que es la caridad y amor de unos con otros, al qual sirve el tener noticia y nuevas unos de otros y mucha comunicación, y usar una misma doctrina y ser uniformes en todo quanto es posible, y en primer lugar el vínculo de la obediencia, que une los particulares con sus Prepósitos, y entre sí los locales y con los Porviciales, y los unos y los otros con el General; en manera que la subordenación de unos a otros se guarde diligentemente." *Cons.*, 821.

the union between the instrument and the divine hand. More specifically, we need to consider the place of that “familiarity with God” achieved through the practice of the *Exercises*, as well as the place of discernment as they discuss it. The rules for discernment are central, as we saw, to a choice that is in theory in accordance with God’s will. The usefulness one can ascribe to discernment, however, exceeds this choice and the practice of the *Exercises*—this practice aims at developing a basic proficiency in the technique, itself contingent on the technique’s interiorization, and oriented towards its future implementation. I noted above that this proficiency would prove crucial precisely when the instruments proceeded to scatter in diverse parts of the world, allowing them to determine how to proceed in the unpredictable scenarios that they found themselves facing: Patrick Heelan argues this point eloquently, going so far as to elevate the common possession of discernment, as I also noted above, to the status of a unifying force.<sup>24</sup>

The spirits with which discernment is concerned stand, one could argue, for an important minimization of the mediation that characterizes the creature’s dealings with God. The consolation without preceding cause—the very criterion for the exercise of discernment—foregrounds, in fact, the process’ openness to a ‘mystical’ immediacy, no different from the one that some identify in the notion of an instrument that surrenders to the divine grip.<sup>25</sup> The reflection on obedience exhibits the opposite orientation. It aims at a comprehensive recall (in the sense of ordering something previously handed out to be returned to its source) of a

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<sup>24</sup> “This little book moulded the first companions of Ignatius and made possible the extraordinary expansion of the Jesuit order in the fifty years after Ignatius’ death, and the effects of its pedagogy formed a worldwide bond such that, despite isolation from one another on five continents, the first generations of Jesuits seemed to be responding to a common, still, but commanding voice.” Heelan makes this point in his Foreword to Antonio de Nicolás’ *Ignatius De Loyola, Powers of Imagining*, x.

<sup>25</sup> For Buckley, the metaphor of the instrument “emphasizes contact, the union in touch, the presence, that in some way is found in all mystical experience” (*The Catholic University as Promise and Project*, 86). The minimization of mediation implicit in the notion of a direct “contact” could seem to allude to something like the ‘mystical’ union that in the preceding part I opposed to an ‘instrumental’ kind of union. I continue to think, however, that the union at stake here is instrumental, since in the final analysis it aims not at a contemplative absorption but at the instrument’s effective deployment. But that is not to say that the metaphor makes no room for a mystical dimension. In fact, and as I will show, it is to the extent that it makes room for that dimension that the metaphor can emerge as something that in fact resists some of the implications of the vision of obedience that is crystallizing in the letters I consider.

capacity whose internalization and diffusion have been systematically encouraged. Obedience, which calls for discernment to be concentrated in the figure of the superior, can be associated, in this sense, with an interruption of the immediacy that the *Exercises* contemplate as a possibility and that the *Constitutions* evoke through the reference to the divine grip. By no means do I want to imply with this that discernment as it is practiced in the *Exercises* is commensurate with a disappearance of mediation. The guiding presence of a director in the performance of the *Exercises* cannot be elided without consequences for one's understanding of the program—not to mention that the spirits are themselves mediating beings. I am speaking, however, of tendencies, and it seems to me that the director's involvement remains subject to the imperative, forcefully stated in the preliminary annotations, to allow God "to communicate himself directly" with his creatures. Expressed in that imperative, which is also what secures the possibility of a divine consolation, is nothing other than the fundamental orientation of discernment, an orientation that obedience could seem to oppose. One of Ignatius' greatest achievements lies in a vision that can embrace both tendencies at once as well as the tension that results from their encounter. I am arguing, however, that when it is not a question of the practice of the *Exercises* but of life under a superior as it is discussed in the letters I have considered, it is possible to speak not simply of a tension but of a true antagonism.

My discussion of Ignatius' critique of ascetic ideals began with an analysis of Ignatius' use of the metaphor of the instrument in his assessment of those expressions of the ascetic drive that in his view were at odds with the Society's charism. It is in the context of this assessment—and of the attempt to determine where the Society stands in relation to monastic culture—that obedience emerges as a concern with an urgency that foreshadows its eventual transformation into one of the matters that would most preoccupy Ignatius. The relation between this emphasis on obedience and the instrumental understanding of the individual Jesuit will be marked by an important tension. For obedience is meant at once to ensure that the instrument's operativity is not compromised and to secure a unity compromised by this operative instrument. Initially a way of neutralizing a threat confronted by the instrument—the damage that results from excessive mortification—obedience emerges in the final instance as an apotropaic against dispersion. What we have here, as I suggested above, are the foundations for an antagonistic relation, a relation in which one element seeks to inhibit the other.

There is perhaps no better evidence of this antagonism than the absence of references to the metaphor of the instrument, and of the problems with which I have shown it to be associated, from the document that synthesizes the different threads of Ignatius' reflection on obedience, starting with those that are developed in his exchanges with Coimbra and Gandía. I am referring here to the letter that on 26 March 1553 Ignatius sent to the Jesuits in Portugal, shortly after Miguel de Torres' visitation and dismissal of those scholastics who, in Coimbra and elsewhere, refused to declare themselves subject to the authority of Rome.<sup>26</sup> The so-called Letter on Obedience has already been alluded to in the course of this discussion. I would like to conclude my analysis of Ignatius' critique of ascetic ideals, however, by taking a closer look at this crucial document.<sup>27</sup> Where does Ignatius' final and most extensive statement on obedience fall within this critique?

Although it was addressed to the Jesuits in Portugal, and although its central aim was to bring the Portuguese crisis to a close, the Letter on Obedience was thought to contain relevant wisdom for the entire Society as it existed at the time when it was written and for future generations of Jesuits. This explains why soon after it was dispatched it would be copied and read out loud in Jesuit houses all over the world. The letter has been widely anthologized and discussed, and until relatively recently the tendency among historians was to see it as an eloquent summation of that reactionary and authoritarian worldview that was for a long time attributed to Ignatius and to the Society, which on this account was itself regarded as synonymous with the so-called Counter-Reformation. The swift way in which the letter transcended the concrete circumstances of its composition, and its own sense of the 'timeless' validity of its claims, must have played a role in encouraging this interpretation, which effectively ignores the context in which it originated. I side with those scholars that situate the letter within the specific context of the Portuguese crisis and of the challenges faced by the Society in its early years—when the Society itself, as Ignatius liked to remark, was *in fieri*—but my reading of this document has a very specific focus. I approach the Letter on Obedience from the perspective of my previous discussion of the metaphor of

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<sup>26</sup> Ep., 4:669–681. English translation in *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, 251–60.

<sup>27</sup> Dominique Bertrand includes a careful reflection on the letter in *La Politique de s. Ignace*, 71–95. An extended commentary on the letter can be found in Manuel Espinosa Polit, *Perfect Obedience* (Westminster: Newman, 1947).

the instrument. As regards this discussion, the significance of this document is found, as I already noted, in the perplexing absence of the metaphor, perplexing because of the pivotal role played by the metaphor in the reflection it brings to a close.

The stakes of this absence become apparent at that moment in the letter in which Ignatius sets out to explain why he is filled with a “longing” that Jesuits prove capable of an “outstanding” obedience. This longing, he suggests, finds its justification in a theological dictum: the demand to excel in obedience, he explains, is imposed by “he who through his obedience redeemed a world lost to disobedience, ‘becoming obedient unto death, even death upon the cross.’”<sup>28</sup> By this point in the letter, Ignatius has cited various sources in support of the view that the offering of one’s will and judgment is the most “noble” offering. None of them, however, can aspire to have the same authority as the exemplary obedience Christ showed in the course of the Passion. This reference to the Passion is important not only because it is there that one finds a model of obedience, but also because of what this obedience implies: Christ’s obedience *usque ad mortem*, as I discussed above, marks the apotheosis of the process known as *exinanitio*, which in the third week of the *Exercises* is vividly brought to the fore. It is by reference to that obedience that the Son can be legitimately referred to as a slave, a characterization that establishes him as the central instrument of the economy of salvation and of God’s salvific praxis.

This instrumental dimension, however, is absent from the letter, and Ignatius’ discussion of the Passion is important precisely because of his decision *not* to make it explicit. Instead, we see him emphasizing the sacrificial connotations of the Passion. Already in a letter he had sent to Coimbra on 14 January 1548, Ignatius had claimed that obedience could not be “simply a matter of the disposition of works observable in public.”<sup>29</sup> Doing what one was told was not enough; it was also necessary to feel, and ultimately to believe, that what one was commanded to do was the right thing. The Letter on Obedience builds upon this insight, refining the terminology and speaking of an “effective execution [*execución en el efecto*]” and of a “conformity in affect [*conformidad en el afecto*],” both of them necessary for establishing “a single sense [*un sentir mismo*]” with the

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<sup>28</sup> “el que redimió por obediencia el mundo perdido por falta della, *factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.*” *Ep.*, 4:671.

<sup>29</sup> *Ep.*, 1:689.

superior.<sup>30</sup> The distinction between these “degrees” of obedience and the insistence on the importance of attaining the summit represented by an “obedience of the understanding” are both intended, we read, to allow one to make a “complete and perfect offering [*entera y perfecta oblación*]” of oneself.<sup>31</sup> In obeying in the way specified by Ignatius, one is transformed into a thing of the kind offered to God in a sacrificial ritual. This is where Christ’s obedience *usque ad mortem* proves crucial. Christ’s Passion serves as a model precisely in its quality as a sacrifice; his death upon the cross is a perfect example of the complete offering—or the “holocaust,” to echo Ignatius’ terminology—that obedience is:

Obedience is nothing less than a holocaust. It is there that we can offer ourselves completely, without excluding any part of ourselves, in the fire of love to our Creator and Lord at the hands of his ministers. By obedience one puts aside all that one is, one dispossesses oneself of all that one has, in order to be possessed and governed by divine Providence by means of a superior.<sup>32</sup>

As we can see, it is the *totalizing* quality of the sacrifice implied by obedience that makes it a fitting analogue of Christ’s own sacrifice. Ignatius makes this point explicit in his letter shortly after, in a fragment that evokes of the passage from the Letter to the Romans where Paul urges his addressees “to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Rom 12:1): shifting the emphasis away from the body, Ignatius asks everyone in Portugal to consider “the worth of the noble sacrifice offered, involving the highest human power, and the completeness of the self-offering undertaken, as one strips oneself of self, becoming a living victim pleasing to the divine majesty [*hostia uiua y agradable á su diuina majestat*.]”<sup>33</sup> *Thusian*, Paul’s word for ‘sacrifice,’ appears here as *hostia*, a Spanish word derived from the Latin *hostia*, which is how *thusian* appears in the Vulgate. In Spanish, however, the word *hostia* cannot help but evoke one specific sacrifice: *hostia* is the word for the host, and is thus a way of alluding to the sacrifice of the mass.<sup>34</sup> The totalizing aspirations of obedience are in this way linked to the kind of commemoration of Christ’s

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<sup>30</sup> *Ep.*, 4:672–74.

<sup>31</sup> *Ep.*, 4:674.

<sup>32</sup> “Y es cierto, pues la obediencia es un holocausto, en el qual el hombre todo entero, sin diuidir nada de sí, se ofrece en el fuego de caridad a su Criador y Señor por mano de sus ministros; y pues es una resignation entera de sí mismo, por la cual se desposey de sí todo, por ser poseido y gouernado de la diuina prouidentia por medio del superior.” *Ep.*, 4:657.

<sup>33</sup> *Ep.*, 4:677.

<sup>34</sup> Covarrubias, *Tesoro*, 999–1000.

sacrifice that is carried out in a Eucharistic setting.<sup>35</sup> Each instance of obedience presents an opportunity to imitate Christ's obedience unto death and in that sense to bring into being a commemorative image of Christ. What I find most intriguing about this appeal to the logic of *imitatio* is the way in which the 'victim' displaces the 'instrument' as that which one should aspire to become. This displacement, as one can see, inauguates a relation to providence that differs from the one presupposed by the instrument: one is not simply "governed," but also "possessed" by providence.

In the end, though, obedience offers the individual more than a way of imitating Christ's obedience *usque ad mortem*. In obeying, he attests to the cosmic validity of the subordination obedience demands, and of the hierarchical destiny of every being. That is the message of what is perhaps the letter's most famous passage:

All that I have said about obedience applies just as much to individuals in relation to their immediate superiors as it does to rectors and local superiors in relation with provincials, to these in relation to the General, and to the latter in relation with the one appointed by God our Lord as his superior, namely, his vicar on earth. In this way, a complete range of subordination can be safeguarded, and as a result the union and love without which the well-being and government of the Society cannot be maintained, nor indeed those of any other religious congregation.

Such is the mode in which divine Providence gently disposes all things, so that the lower via the middle, and the middle via the higher, are led to their final ends. Thus, among the angels there is a subordination of one hierarchy to another, and similarly in the heavens and in the movements of all bodies, there is a pull from the higher to the lower, and among the higher, each in its due order, up to the supreme mover.

The same can be seen upon the earth with respect to all secular constitutions that are duly established, and with respect to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is subordinated to a single overall vicar of Christ our Lord. So much the better is the government where such subordination is safeguarded, and if this subordination is faulty in any society, the failings become all too obvious.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The reference to obedience as turning one into a host is first found in Polanco's initial reply to Oviedo. We read there that with the aid of obedience "man in his entirety becomes a living and agreeable host to His Divine Majesty, holding onto nothing that is its own." *Ep., 2:57.*

<sup>36</sup> "Y lo que tengo dicho de la obediencia, tanto se entiende en los particulares para con sus inmediatos superiores, como en los rectores y prepositos para con los provinciales, y en estos para con el General, y en este para con quien Dios nuestro señor le dio por superior, que es el vicario suyo en la tierra; porque así enteramente se guarde la subordinación y conseguientemente la unión y caridad, sin la cual el buen ser y gobierno de la Compañía no puede conservarse, como ni de otra alguna congregación."

Ignatius does not view the sacrificial dimension of obedience and the rationality of the hierarchical cosmos as discontinuous. Unlike Luther, and in spite of his own insistence on the doctrine of *exianitio* and on God's hiddenness in the *Exercises*, he does not view Christ's sacrifice as the foundation of a theology which, like Luther's *theologia crucis*, would expose the false pretensions of a *theologia gloriae*. Christ's obedience in fact ends up being assimilated to the law of subordination that underlies the cosmos. The law that holds it necessary for lower heavenly bodies to be in "a proper inferior position" if they are to feel "the pull and influence" of higher bodies emerges in this sense as the very paradigm of obedience. If obedience is, as Ignatius writes, another name for the operation through which one "rational" creature is "moved" by another, then it cannot be denied that "it is necessary for the one moved to be below and subordinated so that one person can receive the pull and force from the person who moves."<sup>37</sup> The problem of 'motion,' a central concern of Ignatius', appears here in its most mechanistic guise, in sharp contrast to its discussion in the *Exercises*. Of crucial importance here is the passage's reference to the "disposition" of providence. While this word could refer to the act by which God disposes—in the sense of making the necessary provision for something—that creatures be hierarchically arranged, here it designates the very arrangement (*dispositio*) whereby the most minimal things are led back to their one supreme end. Instead of arranging, providence is this arrangement. To dispossess oneself of one's self so as to be entirely possessed by providence is thus ultimately to be possessed by this arrangement. This possession is precisely that to which the hierarchical arrangement linking execution, affect, and understanding is meant to attest. In obeying, the obedient self emerges as an image of a hierarchical cosmos.

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Y es este el modo con que suavemente dispone todas cosas la diuina prouidentia, reduzindo las cosas ínfimas por las medias, y las medias por las summas, á sus fines. Y así en los ángeles hay subordenación de una hierarchía á otra; en los cielos y en todos los movimientos corporales, reducción de los inferiores á los superiores, y de los superiores, por su orden, hasta un supremo mouimiento.

Y lo mismo se ve en la tierra en todas policías seglares bien ordenadas, y en la jerarquía eclesiástica, que se reduce a un universal vicario de Christo nuestro Señor. Y cuanto esta subordinación mejor es guardada, el gobierno es mejor, y de la falta della se ven en todas congregaciones faltas tan notables." *Ep.*, 4:680–1.

<sup>37</sup> "es menester que la que es mouida sea subiecta y subordenada, para que resciua la influentia y uirtud de la que mueue." *Ep.*, 4:675.

Is this an example of the authoritarian spirit that prompted one writer to speak of the Society as “the first embodiment of the totalitarian idea”?<sup>38</sup> The problem with the notion that Ignatius epitomizes the reactionary ethos of Counter-Reformation Catholicism—aside from the misunderstandings that surround the very notion of a ‘Counter-Reformation’—is that most of the time it was based (fortunately it is now increasingly a thing of the past) on a series of prejudices that had accrued over centuries in which the Society was regarded with intense suspicion rather than on an encounter with the writings of Ignatius’ themselves. What I have just said, however, would seem to suggest that this understanding of Ignatius and the Society is not entirely wrong, and that it actually finds support in his writings. The letter that sums up Ignatius’ views on obedience offers a comprehensive and strong defense of hierarchical subordination, partly through an exaltation of its sacrificial possibilities. Ignatius’ writings, however, need to be assessed globally, and individual statements must be understood not in isolation, but in relation to other areas of his work. Only in that way can one become aware of the tensions that make this work compelling.

The metaphor of the instrument is absent from the Letter on Obedience, even though it figures prominently at the outset of the reflection that the letter brings to a close. I have suggested that this absence is evidence of an antagonism between the instrumental vision that is formulated through the metaphor and the demands of obedience. I am reminded in this context of the *Constitution’s* famous discussion of the ideal of obedience:

Each of those who live under obedience ought to allow himself to be carried and directed by Divine Providence through the agency of the superior as if he were a lifeless body which allows itself to be carried away to any place and to be treated in any manner desired, or as if he were a staff which serves in any place and in any manner whatsoever in which the holder wishes to use it.<sup>39</sup>

Too much has been made of the “lifeless body” that is mentioned in this passage, to the detriment of the “staff,” the other example that the *Constitutions* include. The analysis of the antagonism between the instrumental

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<sup>38</sup> Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1999), 41.

<sup>39</sup> “cada uno de los que viven en obediencia se debe dejar llevar y regir de la divina Providencia por medio del Superior, como si fuese un cuerpo muerto, que se dexa llevar adondequier y trattar comoquier, o como un bastón de hombre Viejo, que en dondequier y en qualquier cosa que dél ayudarse querrá el que le tiene en la mano, sirve.” *Cons.* 547.

vision and the demands of obedience would do well to remark on this implement, however, since it constitutes an instrument unto itself—it is in fact one of the examples that Aquinas uses while illustrating how instruments operate. The passage implies that in obeying one can be assimilated into God's providential praxis, but this assimilation is contingent on a mediation of the superior. Between the staff and God there is a hand that is decidedly not God's.

In the end, the metaphor of the instrument is not expunged from the *Constitutions*. Ignatius' use of the metaphor in his letters might serve to modulate the normative pretensions one can ascribe to it as a result, precisely, of its inclusion in a text like the *Constitutions*. But that does not mean that this normative dimension is challenged. To the contrary, the metaphor's presence in the *Constitutions* bestows it with an authority that one must take into account as one looks at other areas of Ignatius' work. In this sense, the stringent defense of hierarchical subordination that one finds in the Letter on Obedience, even when it seems to forget the 'instrument' in the name of the 'victim,' remains framed by an insistence on the possibility of being gripped by the hand of God. Everything that Ignatius has to say about hierarchy must be assessed in relation to this fundamentally anarchical possibility, anarchical to the extent that it implies that on some fundamental level one must make allowance for the fact that God's dealings with his creatures might require no mediation—as the *Exercises* themselves emphasize, and as the metaphor itself suggests through its emphasis on the contact with God's hand—and ultimately that all instruments are equal.

## POSTSCRIPT

I pointed out at the beginning of this study that the corpus of the Society's foundation constitutes an important juncture in the conceptualization of God's providential praxis, and that the opening onto this question is found in an element of the Society's imaginary. Understood by reference to the genealogy in which it is inscribed, the metaphor of the instrument, I argued, signals an intervention into the problem with which this genealogy is concerned.

I myself also noted, however, that the metaphor of the instrument appears within the context of an attempt, on the part of Ignatius, to represent key aspects of the Society's existence, precisely what I understand to be the purpose of the imaginary to which I refer. Throughout this study, I have tried to emphasize the dialectical relation that obtains between the insights yielded by the conceptualization of God's providential praxis that I associate with the appearance of the metaphor of the instrument and the ways in which the Society, chiefly through the figure of its founder, comes to think about itself. I began by carefully considering the various elements within the *Exercises* that foreshadow the appearance of the metaphor of the instrument in the Society's *Constitutions*, before exploring what the metaphor might tell us about the Society's mission and about its relation to the world. I then argued that the metaphor of the instrument is also implicated in the Society's efforts to determine its place within tradition and that it serves as an imaginary locus in which to trace the Society's definitive *adieu* to medieval monasticism.

One of the guiding presuppositions of my whole analysis was that the metaphor of the instrument serves as a point of convergence for the different components of the corpus that I consider here. In this sense, the metaphor can be said to secure a basic continuity between these components and to bestow this corpus with a basic coherence. I emphasize this point because it sheds light on my own understanding of Ignatius' 'discourse' as possessed of a consistency that at first sight it might seem to lack, and that in fact might dissuade one from speaking of a 'discourse' in the first place. Despite the heterogeneity of the whole that these components constitute and despite the heterogeneous nature of these components themselves, this discourse exists. It is, however, a very unstable discourse, and not only on account of its constitutive

heterogeneity. Another aspect to consider in this regard is the fact that its consistency is metaphorically secured. It lacks, as I noted in my introduction, the kind of technical precision that would give its elements a more exact definition and the systematic thrust that would bind its components in a cohesive way. It remains steeped, echoing Blumenberg, in a ‘mythical’ way of thinking—of course, this is precisely its allure.<sup>1</sup>

If I had to single out what I take to be my most important contribution to the study of the Society’s foundation, I would have to mention my focus on the Society’s imaginary. A question I did not thematize explicitly in connection with this focus, and which I would like to explore briefly in this conclusion, is the question of ideology. Throughout my analysis, I found myself returning to the suspicion that the uses of the metaphor of the instrument that I study have a definite ideological inflection. The *Exercises*, for one, would seem to present a clear case of the process of ‘interpellation’ as discussed in social and political theory.<sup>2</sup> It suffices here to evoke what the concept of ‘interpellation’ designates at its most fundamental: the process through which institutions transform ‘individuals’ into ‘subjects.’ This ‘subjection,’ as is well known, is premised on concrete practices that address themselves to the individual and that ask him to recognize specific institutional values as his own. According to the theory of ideology, what distinguishes the ‘subject’ from the ‘individual’ is precisely this institutional determination.

In my reading of the *Exercises*, I argued that they seek to facilitate a transition towards efficacy. They allow the individual to transcend his damaged condition, eventually so as to be assimilated into God’s labor. If it seems reasonable to conceive of the *Exercises* as a practice of interpellation, it is because they anticipate what is clearly an institutional determination of the kind discussed by the theory of ideology. As the *Constitutions* state, it is through the performance of the *Exercises* that the individual can expect to be gripped by the hand of God. This ‘instrument’ is an example of that ‘subject’ that the process of interpellation seeks to produce.

The Society’s role in the interpellation of Catholic subjects in post-Tridentine Europe and beyond is well known. One thinks, in this context, of the important studies devoted to the Society’s relation to the phenomenon

<sup>1</sup> I refer the reader once again to Lonergan’s remarks on the “element of myth” that subsists in the metaphor of the instrument, which I discussed in Part Two.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward an Investigation,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, trans. by Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 121–76.

of propaganda.<sup>3</sup> What distinguishes this study is my concern with the interpellation not of Catholic subjects at large, but of Jesuits themselves. I am more interested, to resort to Suárez's distinction, in the *Exercises' usus passivus* rather than in their *usus activus*. Under what conditions does the individual Jesuit emerge as an instrument, and what can this specific institutional determination, and the process of interpellation on which it is premised, tell us about the way in which the Society understood itself? One way to further develop my own observations would be to make this 'interpellative' dimension explicit and to use this question as a frame for a reading of the *Exercises*.

Marx and Engels wrote that "in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down, as in a *camera obscura*."<sup>4</sup> What they wanted to emphasize with this analogy was not simply the fact that the task of ideology is to make men and their circumstances "appear" in front of them and that ideology thus operates through representations; they were also interested in calling attention to the fact that these representations were inseparable from a degree of distortion. Since then, ideology has been associated with institutionalized forms of deception, with the projection of fictions intended to occlude the reality of man's circumstances and to serve the interests of specific institutions. This conception of ideology has to be taken into account when one inquires into the Society's relation to ideology, if only because of the fact that it evokes that way of characterizing the Society that I touched upon at various points in this study, as the wing of a reactionary Church intent on making its subjects serve its own interests. Let me state in the most categorical terms that this is not at all what I have in mind when I raise the question of ideology. I do think it is possible to speak of a practice of interpellation in relation to the *Exercises* and to the individual's emergence as an instrument, but as I have insisted throughout this study, this characterization of the individual Jesuit also forms part of the imaginary in and through which the Society aims to represent itself to itself. This imaginary, as it turns out, is also a fundamental component of the complex phenomenon known as ideology, more fundamental, perhaps, than the mechanisms of interpellation by which institutions seek to be recognized by particular subjects.

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Evonne Levy's *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1976), 42.

Paul Ricoeur is perhaps the thinker who has done the most to make sure that this dimension is not forgotten in discussions of ideology.<sup>5</sup> Ricoeur views deception as only the “surface layer” of the phenomenon of ideology, the “depth structure” of which is found, instead, in those operations that refer to “the necessity for any group to give itself an *image* of itself.”<sup>6</sup> Ricoeur’s conception of ideology builds upon Clifford Geertz’s argument that there is a “basic” function of ideology, concerned with “integrating human action at its public level,” an argument that is in turn based on Max Weber’s notion of “social action” as “socially integrated” behavior.<sup>7</sup> The metaphor of the instrument stands, as I have argued, for the product of a practice of interpellation, for the individual in its specific institutional determination. But to the extent that it is implicated in the representation of a program of “social action” (a program that the metaphor itself aligns with God’s providential labor) it is also a central component of “the symbolic constitution of the social bond” on which this action is premised: as Ricoeur writes, before the interpellation and subjection of individuals, there first needs to be an institution that can interpellate and subject those individuals.<sup>8</sup> This constitutive dimension is what I wanted to elucidate in my analysis, and it is with it in mind that I insisted, throughout, that I was concerned with an element of the Society’s imaginary.

Beyond interpellation and beyond the constitution of a social bond, there is yet a third dimension of the problem of ideology that is worth considering in the context of the metaphor of the instrument. Here I can do no more than to speculate on it; I leave a rigorous elaboration of what is here no more than a series of tentative claims for a future inquiry. As Ricoeur explains, Marx and Engels’ concept of ideology is derived from Ludwig Feuerbach’s understanding of religion. Feuerbach, as is well known, views religion not simply as an “example” of ideology, but as ideology in its pure form: religion, in his view, is a human production that “effects the inversion of heaven and earth.” It produces an image of the human life-process, which it then attributes to something other than man,

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<sup>5</sup> Ricoeur’s discussion of ideology and, in particular, on this more fundamental dimension of ideology, can be found in three essays: “Imagination in Discourse and in Action,” “Ideology and Utopia,” and “Science and Ideology.” The first one was already mentioned in the introduction, when I first introduced the concept of the social imaginary. My discussion here draws on all three.

<sup>6</sup> Ricoeur, “Imagination in Discourse and in Action,” 182. The distinction between “surface layer” and “depth structure” can be found in “Ideology and Utopia,” 309.

<sup>7</sup> Ricoeur, “Ideology and Utopia,” 316.

<sup>8</sup> Ricoeur, “Imagination in Discourse and in Action,” 183.

and which it simultaneously establishes as the ultimate locus of truth.<sup>9</sup> Heaven, as Feuerbach remarked, is only an image of the earth; providence itself, what we could refer to as the ‘divine life-process’ or as ‘God and his circumstances,’ an image of man and his circumstances.<sup>10</sup>

A discussion of the merits and the limitations of Feuerbach’s concept of religion (and of the merits and the limitations of the concept of ideology that is derived from it) would fall beyond the confines of this project. I mention Feuerbach simply because of what his conception of providence implies for the metaphor of the instrument as I discuss it. Confronted with this conception, one cannot help but wonder whether it is possible to speak, in relation to the metaphor, of an inversion of heaven and earth. Is the metaphor of the instrument implicated in the kind of projection of human circumstances onto the life of God that Feuerbach discusses? In this view, the instrument that is gripped by God would be an image of the instruments that man himself grasps.

This image does not have to refer exclusively to the Society and its constituents. It can be a reflection of man’s growing consciousness of the key role played by his own strategic mobilization of instruments in the period that corresponds to the Society’s foundation. Regardless of whether one is speaking of an arrangement of lenses designed, like Galileo’s telescope, to collect rays of light, or of a treatise aimed, like Bacon’s *Novum organum*, to specify the steps for inductive reasoning, the mobilization of instruments is known to have shaped man’s relation to the world in modernity. Here I can only raise the question of whether Ignatius’ theology opens onto this problem. The relation between the Jesuit instrument and the other ‘instruments’ that emerge in modernity is a topic for a future study. At any rate, the reference to human circumstances does not have to be interpreted as being a statement about man in general. What is at stake in it can be nothing other than the human circumstances of Jesuits themselves. In this view, the instrument that is gripped by God would be an image of the specific instruments that Jesuits gripped: a catechetical work like Canisius’ *Summa* (1555), or even the *Exercises* themselves, regarded from the perspective of their *usus activus*. These are examples of the kinds of instruments that Jesuits wielded strategically, conscious of the central role they played in the consolidation of the Society’s own sense of its privileged place in God’s providential work and in the world.

<sup>9</sup> Ricoeur, “Science and Ideology,” 253.

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New York: Harper, 1957), 299–304.



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## INDEX

- Acta* 13, 21–6, 146–53  
*ad modum laborantis*  
and Ignatius' theology 3–4, 94–96, 130  
in *Exercises* 84–86
- Agamben, Giorgio 100, 114
- Alarcón, Manuel 39
- Aldama, Antonio de 104–105, 210, 213,  
215–216
- Alden, Dauril 169–170
- Althusser, Louis 228
- Anderson, Benedict 5
- applicatio sensuum* 39–42
- Aquinas  
theory of the passions 46–47  
sacraments as instruments 118–126  
on use 66–67
- Aristotle  
on images 78  
on instruments 76–78, 114, 117–118
- Arzubialde, Santiago 24, 32, 37, 39, 42, 44  
ascetic drive 159, 171–174  
asceticism  
in monastic culture 163–4  
Ignatius' position on 158, 166–168,  
175–177
- Auerbach, Eric 204
- Augustine 10, 33, 46, 49, 53–57, 63, 66,  
89–91, 113, 119, 126–7, 131
- Bakker, Leo 44, 64
- Bangert, William van 5
- Barthes, Roland 28, 30–32
- Bellecius, Aloysius 24
- Bernard of Clairvaux 150, 177–181
- Bertrand, Dominique 166, 220
- bios praktikos*  
vs. *bios theoretikos* 7–8
- Blankenhorn, Bernhard 118, 120–122
- Blet, Pierre 101, 108–109, 144–145, 210
- Blumenberg, Hans 16–17, 228
- body, metaphor of  
origins 209–210  
conflict with instrument 216–217,  
220–221, 225–226  
and union among Jesuits 211–212, 215
- Böhmer, Heinrich 5
- Bonaventura 40–41, 50–148
- Boyle, Marjorie O'Rourke 21, 147–148
- Bracken, Joseph 32
- Brodrick, James 5, 22
- Buckley, Michael 12, 44, 129–132, 138–139,  
218
- Campen, Annemiek van 32
- Castoriadis, Cornelius 4
- Caussade, Jean-Pierre 9, 99
- Certeau, Michel de 32, 43, 57
- Chanones, Jean 25
- chapters 211
- Christ  
as image 74–75  
in *Exercises* 2, 27, 38–42  
Passion 71–72  
Resurrection 72–74  
Ascension 13, 70, 73–75, 143–153
- Cisneros, Francisco García de 27
- Clark, David Stuart 76
- Clark, James 163
- Clossey, Luke 13, 129, 137, 139–40, 163
- Cohen, Marc 77
- Coimbra 13, 157–159, 169–179, 185–189,  
192, 197
- concurrence  
and conservation 90–91
- conformation  
and propagation 89–90
- congregation 164, 211–214
- Conrod, Frédéric 28, 52, 82
- consolation 45, 63–67, 74
- Constitutions*  
composition of 101–102  
*Exercises* and 2–3, 15–16, 95–97  
instrument in 4, 11–12, 108–111  
promulgation of 105–107
- contemptus mundi*  
philosophy of 13, 136, 153, 161, 170–171,  
202
- conversation 12, 133–135
- corpus mysticum*  
doctrine of 210  
and Society of Jesus' body 216
- Covarrubias, Sebastián de 62, 81, 222
- Craig, William Lane 91
- creatures  
*Exercises* and 30–31, 95  
God and 83–84, 89–91, 219, 224, 226

- use and 10, 53–54, 57  
 Crowley, Paul 118  
*cura animarum* 11–12, 170, 209
- Dalmases, Cándido de 5, 21  
 damage 11, 14, 79–85, 168, 176–177, 203, 207, 214–219, 229  
 Damascene 46, 115–119, 121–122, 126  
 Damnation 11, 27, 36, 38–39, 43, 81–85  
 Dante 148  
 deism 90  
 Desiderius Erasmus 51–52, 132, 147  
 desolation 45–46  
 determinism 92  
*deus actuosus* 90  
*deus otiosus* 100  
*devotio moderna* 2, 25  
 discernment 15, 28, 44, 59, 61, 63–65, 169–185, 187, 191–192, 196, 198–205  
 dispersion 109, 165, 204, 208, 219  
*doctrina* 12, 109, 131–135, 165, 210  
 Dudon, Paul 24  
 Dunn, Marilyn 163
- Eguía, Miguel de 51, 52  
 Election  
     *see Spiritual Exercises*  
 Endean, Philip 27, 39, 42, 47, 157, 197, 199, 201  
 Engels, Friedrich 229, 230  
 enjoyment 53–55  
 eschatology  
     and *Exercises* 70–75, 209  
 Espinosa Polit, Manuel 220  
 Eurigena 90  
*exinanitio* 71, 113, 118, 221
- Fabre, Pierre-Antoine 31  
 Fessard, Gaston 29, 36, 61  
 Feuerbach, Ludwig 230–231  
 flesh  
     in hypostatic union 115  
     as instrument 117–118  
     in Christ's Passion 71–72, 116  
     knowledge according to 150–151  
 Fois, Mario 132  
*Formula of the Institute* 101, 132–134  
 Freccero, John 148  
 Freedberg, David 38, 43  
 Freud, Sigmund 159  
 Friedrich, Markus 166  
 Fumaroli, Marc 12, 132
- Gandía 14–15, 166, 186, 188–205  
 Gilson, Etienne 91  
 Gioia, Luigi 55  
 government  
     and divine providence 89–90, 95  
     as use 93  
     Society of Jesus' 97, 100, 105, 166, 186–189  
 Guillén, Antonio 39, 45, 46
- Hamilton, Andrew 33  
 Hauser, Arnold 225  
 Headley, John M. 137–138  
 Heidegger, Martin 8, 78–80  
 hell  
     in *Exercises* 36, 37–40  
 hierarchy  
     and metaphor of body 208  
     in Letter on Obedience 223–224  
     and obedience 215–218  
     and instrument 207–208, 220–221  
 Hughes, Gerhard 61  
 hypostatic union  
     *see* flesh, union, Word
- ideology 228–231  
     *see also* interpellation  
 Ignatius of Loyola, Saint  
     spiritual development 21–24  
     as theologian 3, 15–17  
     and *Exercises* 1–2, 24–26  
     and *Constitutions* 100–105  
     as head of the Society of Jesus 185–186
- image  
     in *Exercises* 35–42  
     and motion 42–46  
     as defense against the mystical 30–33  
     and use 49–58  
     and praxis 80
- imaginary  
     *see* social imaginary
- imagination 35–42  
*Industrias* 102–104  
 instruction  
     and instrument 129–131, 134–135, 165, 168  
     and Society of Jesus' pedagogical mission 132  
     *see also* *doctrina*, conversation
- instrument  
     animate vs. inanimate 77, 114  
     separate vs. conjoined 123

- instrumental action vs. proper action 122
- Son as 113–115  
Christ's flesh as 117  
creatures as 94–95  
in sacramental theology 113–128  
minister as 125–126  
in Polanco's *Industrias* 102–104  
in Society of Jesus' *Constitutions* 105–106  
in Ignatius' letters 159, 166–167  
and critique of asceticism 169, 184  
Jesuit as 102–106, 178–179  
superior as 195, 199–202  
interpellation 228
- Jacobus de Voragine 1, 22  
Jerome, Saint 50, 147
- kenosis  
*see exinanitio*
- King, Peter 47  
Koyré, Alexandre 159
- Labarrière, Pierre-Jean 94  
labor  
God's 83–86  
instruments in 77, 114, 122–123  
*see also ad modum laborantis*
- Leclercq, Jean 163  
Legavre, Paul 134–135  
Leo the Great 150–151  
Lessius, Leonardus 9, 99  
Letter on Obedience 219–226  
Letter on Perfection 169–184  
Leturia, Pedro de 1–2, 23, 51, 101, 109–110, 144  
Levy, Evonne 229  
Lonergan, Bernard 92, 93, 139, 228  
Ludolph of Saxony 1, 22, 23, 69, 70
- MacManamon, John 21–22  
Marx, Karl 229–230  
Melloni, Javier 40  
metaphor 16–17, 94–95, 227–228  
Molina, Luis de 9, 99, 100  
Mombaer, Jan 25  
monasticism 136, 159–162  
*see also contemptus mundi*, ascetic drive  
Monfasani, John 133  
motions 46–48  
mysticism  
Ignatius and 30–33, 42
- mystical vs. instrumental union 107–108, 218
- Nauert, Charles 132  
Nebrija, Antonio de 137  
Neighbor 103, 105, 132, 176  
Nicolas, Antonio T. de 31
- O'Donovan, Oliver 55  
O'Malley, John 3, 5, 21, 26, 27, 51, 96, 101, 104, 105, 127, 130, 132, 133, 135, 136, 137, 157, 158, 160, 185, 187, 309, 211
- obedience  
and doctrine of *exinanitio* 118, 222  
in Ignatius' thought 14–15, 178–181, 219–226  
as sacrifice 189, 222  
and hierarchy 215–218
- Olin, John 51, 132, 149  
*ordinatio vitae* 69  
Ovitt, George 90
- Pacheco, José Carlos Monteiro 158  
Palma, Luis de la 2  
Palomo, Federico 166  
passions 46–48  
Paul, Saint 63, 71–72, 113, 117–118, 120, 144, 150, 200, 209–210, 222  
Pelikan, Jaroslav 99  
Peter Lombard 50–51, 119  
phenomenon  
Resurrection as paradigm of 73–74  
pilgrimage  
in Ignatius' experience 1–2, 23–24, 145–148  
Augustine's allegory of 54
- place  
in monasticism 136–137, 159–161  
and Society of Jesus 211–213, 215
- Polanco, Juan Alfonso de 4, 11, 13, 15, 41, 101–104, 107, 110, 138, 145, 164, 180, 186, 193–198
- Pons Fuster, Francisco 166  
Pranger, M. B. 13, 136–137, 150, 161–162  
praxis  
and providence 7–10, 90, 91–96, 100  
and instruments 76–78, 94  
salvation history as 113–115  
and *Exercises* 80  
use as 54–57
- Principle and Foundation  
*see Spiritual Exercises*
- pronoia* 94, 100

- prophecy  
 in Gandía 196–198  
 hermeneutics of discernment and  
 198–202  
 and hierarchy 203–205
- providence  
 as praxis 7–10, 90–96, 100  
 and creation 89–90, 94–95  
 in *Exercises* 84–86  
 instruments in 113–115  
 as government 90–93  
 as use 93  
*see also* concurrence, conformation, *ad modum laborantis*
- Rahner, Hugo 3, 39, 69, 71  
 Rahner, Karl 60–61, 64, 67  
 Reeves, Marjorie 198  
 reference  
 and use 55–57  
 and Election 66–68  
*Regula monachorum* 163–164  
 Restrepo, Darío 133–134  
 Ribadeneira, Pedro de 22–23, 52  
 Ricoeur, Paul 5, 230–231  
 Rodrigues, Francisco 158  
 Rodrigues, Simão 157–168, 169, 185–187  
 Romo, Eduardo Javier Alonso 166  
 Roo, William van 119  
 Rosier-Catach, Irène 119, 122  
 Ruiz Jurado, Manuel 166, 192, 197, 198,  
 204  
 sacraments 113–127  
 Sheldrake, Philip 136–137, 139, 159–161,  
 163  
 Shore, Paul 23  
 Sin 136–137, 139, 159–161, 163  
 Smith, D. Vance 160  
 social imaginary 4–5, 209, 230  
 Society of Jesus  
 foundation 5, 100–102  
 charism 6, 14, 158, 219  
 mission 109, 111, 127, 129–141  
 administration 185–186  
 and its predecessors 13, 109, 159–160,  
 180, 211  
*Spiritual Exercises*  
 genesis 24–26
- structure 27–28  
 Meditation on the Three Sins 36  
 Meditation on Sins 36–37  
 Meditation on Hell 37–38  
 Meditation on Two Standards 108–109  
 Principle and Foundation 32  
 Election 57–68  
*Contemplatio ad amorem* 82–86  
 and metaphor of the instrument 94–96  
 and three ways 29–30  
 uses 106  
 spiritual passions 47–48  
 Suárez, Francisco 10, 29–30, 86, 99,  
 106–108, 139, 229
- Tetlow, Joseph 32  
 theism 90, 93–94  
 theology  
 Ignatius and 3, 15–17  
 positive vs. scholastic 50–53, 126  
 Thompson, John 5  
 Tschipke, Théophil 115, 118
- union  
 mystical vs. instrumental 107–108, 218  
 hypostatic 116–118  
 among Jesuits 209–217  
 use  
 and *Exercises* 10–11, 49–51  
 Augustine's concept of 53–57  
 in *Exercises'* Principle and Foundation  
 32  
 and *Exercises'* Election 57–68
- vestigial topic 147  
 Villoslada, Ricardo García 157, 158  
 vineyard 5, 105, 209, 215  
*vita activa*  
 vs. *vita contemplativa* 8, 163
- Weinstein, Donald 198  
 Will 55–57, 65–68, 189–191  
 William of Saint-Thierry 180–183  
 word 7, 42, 71–72, 115, 118, 123, 124, 132  
 work  
*see ad modum laborantis*
- Zerbolt, Gerard 25